THE NEW
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KUMBH'S LAST WEEKEND DRAWS HUGE CROWD

An elderly devotee being helped by a family member after taking a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj during the Maha Kumbh Mela on Sunday. The Mela will end on February 26. According to the UP government, over 60 crore people have visited the Mela so far | PTI

सत्यमेव जयते
GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

ASSAM WELCOMES
PRIME MINISTER
SHRI NARENDRA MODI
ESTEEMED FOREIGN DELEGATES
AND GLOBAL INVESTORS

ADVANTAGE ASSAM 2.0
Investment and Infrastructure Summit

INAUGURATION
24 February 2025 | 1900hrs
VETERINARY COLLEGE FIELD,
KHANAPARA, GUWAHATI

PARTNER COUNTRIES

Australia Bhutan Germany Indonesia Japan Malaysia Singapore Thailand United Kingdom

In August Presence of

Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya
Governor, Assam

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma
Chief Minister, Assam

Shri Bimal Borah
Minister of Industries, Commerce & Public Enterprises
and Cultural Affairs Department, Assam

Programme Highlights

Inauguration I Ministerial Sessions| Thematic Sessions | B2B, B2G meetings I Exhibition | Valedictory Session

Janasanyog No. D/12222/24/24-Feb-25

Organised by
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DSPL-397

ODISHA
INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET.

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

Inauguration of

Odisha Travel Bazaar

In the August Presence of

Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
Union Tourism Minister

Smt. Pravati Parida
Deputy Chief Minister, Odisha

24 February 2025 | Mayfair Convention, Bhubaneswar

Exhibition & B2B Meetings

25 - 27 February 2025
Swosti Premium,
Bhubaneswar

Explore Business & Tourism Synergies

Discover opportunities, forge partnerships & experience Odisha's rich heritage

- Domestic & Foreign Tour Operators (DTOs & FTOs)
- Odisha's tourism industry showcasing unique offerings
- Structured, pre-scheduled Business to Business interactions
- Exclusive FAM Tours for Buyers
- Cultural Showcase

Entry by Invitation only

Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha

Industry Partner
FICCI

OIPR - 37001/13/0040/2425

The Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd.,

[Scheduled Bank]
"UTHUNGA", NO.1, PAMPAMAHAKAVI ROAD, CHAMARAJPET, BENGALURU - 560 018
Telephone No.22976701. Fax No: 080-26628521, Centrex : 22976600, 22976622,
E-mail : managerit@karnatakaapex.com

No:CEO/CTF/169-B/e-Tenders/2024-25 Dated : 19.02.2025

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through Electronic Portal only)

THE KARNATAKA STATE CO-OPERATIVE APEX BANK LTD., BENGALURU, invites item-wise rate tender (two cover system) from the eligible and reputed Oracle Partners/ Oracle Service providers, who have executed the same magnitude and nature of works in State/Central Govt./Commercial/Scheduled Banks. The details of **Oracle ATS renewal for the period from 31.12.2024 to 30.12.2027** under e-Tender Notification can be downloaded at www.tenderwizard.com/etenders.

Name of Work : Oracle ATS proposal for 3 years (ASFU license - The Karnataka State Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd 21309045 [250113-000775]

· ATS for ASFU-Oracle Database Enterprise edition - processor perpetual (9 core)
· ATS for ASFU-Advance security- processor perpetual (9 core)
· ATS ASFU-Oracle Real Application Clusters - Processor Perpetual (9 core)
(Period -31st Dec 24 to 30th Dec 27)

CALENDER OF EVENTS

1	Tender inviting date	**19.02.2025**
2	Tender No/Ref No	**CEO/CTF/169-B/e-Tender/ /2024-25**
3	KSCAB –Division Name	**Computer Section**
4	E-Tender processing fee payable to KEONICS through e-Payment mode using Credit/Debit/Net banking mode (Non-refundable and to be paid on line at the time of tender submission)	**Rs.5900.00 including GST**
5	Date and time for commencement of downloading of e-Tender	**24.02.2025 @ 11.30 AM onwards**
6	Pre Bid Meeting (If required)	**27.02.2025**
7	Last date and time for online submission of e-Tender	**04.03.2025 up to 5.30 PM**
8	Period of Completion	**9 Days**
9	Opening of Technical Bid	**06.03.2025 @ 3.30 PM onwards**
10	Opening of Commercial Bid	**07.03.2025 @ 3.30 PM onwards**

Sd/-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
KSC Apex Bank Ltd., Bengaluru.

Your Guide to Spicy Living INDULGE Every Friday with THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

NLC India Limited

'Navratna' - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office: No.135, E.V.R. Periyar High Road, Kilpauk, Chennai - 600 010
CORPORATE OFFICE: BLOCK-1, NEYVELI - 607 801, TAMIL NADU
CIN: L93090TN1956GOI003507 Website: www.nlcindia.in

NOTICE FOR EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Sealed tenders are invited by NLC India Limited, Neyveli for the **"Empanelment of Advertising Agencies on Rate Contract Basis for a period of Two years (2025-2027) for NLC India Limited & its Subsidiaries".**

Tender No:	002/GM/CCD/EAA/2025 Dt: 19-02-2025
Bid Guarantee Amount / EMD	₹ 1,36,000.00 (Rupees One Lakh thirty six thousand only)
Cost of Document (non-refundable)	₹ 2000/-(Rupees Two Thousand only)
Last date & time for receipt of bidder	17-03-2025 upto 15:00 Hrs.
Date & Time of tender opening	17-03-2025 at 15:30 Hrs.

Interested INS Accredited advertising agencies can visit **www.nlcindia.in / www.eprocure.gov.in** for detailed information. The agencies may send their application along with relevant documents on or before 17-03-2025 till 15.00 Hrs. to the address mentioned below:

O/o The General Manager / Corporate Communications, NLC India Limited, Museum Road, Block-2, Neyveli – 607 801, Phone: 04142-252257
e-mail: nlcil.ccdept@nlcindia.in & pro.nlc57@gmail.com

For enquiries, Kindly contact the above official and in the event of any corrigendum / amendment, the same will be hosted in the website **www.nlcindia.in / www.eprocure.gov.in**

PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS: HELP IT TO HELP YOU

ORIX LEASING & FINANCIAL SERVICES INDIA LIMITED

(formerly known as OAIS Auto Financial Services Limited) (A Subsidiary of ORIX Auto Infrastructure Services Limited)
Regd. Office : Plot No. 94, Marol Co-operative Industrial Estate, Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 059
Tel.: + 91 22 2859 5093 / 6707 0100 | Fax: +91 22 2852 8549
Email: info@orixindia.com | www.orixindia.com | CIN: U74900MH2006PLC163937

(Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002)

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from ORIX Leasing & Financial Services India Limited. The loans of the below mentioned borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loans were classified as NPA as per the RBI Guidelines. Amounts due by them to ORIX Leasing & Financial Services India Limited, are mentioned as per the respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Name of borrowers	Outstanding as per 13(2) Notice	Notice Date	Details of Secured asset
1	LN0000000010106	SME Secured Loan	1. B C Narayanaswamy 2. Bhagya N 3. Shashank B N 4. M/s Balaji Enterprises	INR 2,56,29,490.03/-	21.02.2025	All That Piece And Parcel Immovable Property Bearing Vacant Site No. 51, Katha No. 46b, Situated At Boopsandra Village, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, Karnataka-560094, Measuring East To West: 29 Feet And North To South: 70 Feet, Totally Measuring 2030 Sq. Ft., And Bounded As:- **East By : Site No.52, West By : Site No.50, North By : Bda Park, South By : 30 Feet Road**
2	LN0000000019195 LN0000000015547	SME Secured Loan	1. K M Prakash 2. Kusuma R	INR 1,35,06,325.62/-	21.02.2025	All That Piece And Parcel Of The Property Bearing Site No.01, Assessment No. 49/5, Khatha No.1042/49/5, Situated At Doddathoguru Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Karnataka-560100, Measuring East To West : 45.6 Feet And North To South: 45 Feet, Total Measuring 2052 Sq. Feet, And Bounded As: **East : Property Belongs To Sri Venktesh, West: Property Belongs To Sri Nanjappa, North: 12 Ft. Road, South : Property Belonging To Bojareddy**

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts due to ORIX Leasing & Financial Services India Limited as per details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc., within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings U/s 13(4) and Sec. 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgage properties mentioned herein above to realize the amount due to ORIX Leasing & Financial Services India Limited. Further you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured asset either by way of sale / lease or otherwise.

Sd/-
Date : 21.02.2025 Authorised officer
Place : Bangalore ORIX Leasing & Financial Services India Limited

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office : 802, Natraj By Rustomjee, Western Express Highway, Sir M.V. Road, Andheri East, Mumbai - 400069, Maharashtra.
Jayanagar Branch : Office No. 180,Amrutha ,5Th Main,4Th Block West, Jayanagar,Bangalore-560011(Karnataka).

APPENDIX IV POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub –section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of AHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Sl No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Date of Possession
1	(COMBINE LOAN CODE_NO. 18800003361 Jayanagar Branch) **Rajesh M Gopalakrishnan** (Borrower) **Saumya Rajesh** (Co Borrower)	**" Schedule A Property:** Bearing Property No.13 & 14 V P Katha No.223,Present BBMP Katha No.1631/233/13&14 formed in converted Sy No.11/1,11/2,and 8/1,converted for residential purpose vide conversion order bearing No's BDS.ALN.SR(S) 162/2000-2001 Dated 13.02.2021,Issued by Deputy Comissioner BangaloreDistrict,Situated at Yelenehalli Village,Begur Hobi,Bangalore south Taluk,Bangalore ,Measuring about 3242.75 sq.ft . **Schedule B Property (Description of Flat) :** Flat Bearing No.101 in the 1st Floor SAI RESIDENCY having super built up area of 900 sq.ft together with 241 sq.ft undivided share of Land comprised in Schedule "A" property." and bounded on the **East By :** Site No.12, **West By :** Road, **North By :** Road And **South By :** Site No.15&property belongs to Smt.Prathima Jaganathin Sy No.11/3 &11/4.	**14-10-2024 ₹ 19,43,961.00**	**21-02-2025**

Place : Jayanagar Authorised Officer
Date : 24.02.2025 Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

UJVN Limited

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No.U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

RO No. 140 **Date Extension Notice -1** **Dated : 22/02/2025**

Due to unavoidable reasons, the date mentioned in e-Tender No. 40/EE(Civil) / MB-II / Chinyalisaur / 2024-25 invited by Office of the Executive Engineer (Civil), Maneri Bhali Stage-II, Chinyalisaur, Uttarkashi is extended as follows:-

Last Date of Submission of Tender on website: 01/03/2025 Upto 17:00 Hrs.
Last Date of Submission of Documents in Hard Copy: 03/03/2025 Upto 11:00 Hrs.
Date of Opening of Tender on website: 03/03/2025 at 15:00 Hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal http://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer (Civil)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED

Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. **E-Mail id :** crmd@cityunionbank.in, **Ph :** 0435-2432322, **Fax :** 0435-2431746

RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Re-Tender-cum Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.28,59,536/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Six only)** as on **18-02-2025** together with further interest to be charged from **19-02-2025** onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors **No.1) M/s. S.V. Silks, No.85/3703, Ganigarapete, Doddaballapur, Karnataka - 561203. No.2) Mr. Vishwanath, S/o. Shivanna, D.No.3790, 28th Ward, Taluk Office Road, Deshadapete, Behind Old SRM, Doddaballapur - 561203. No.3) Mrs. Kanyakumari CP, W/o. Vishwanath, D.No.3790, 28th Ward, Taluk Office Road, Deshadapete, Behind Old SRM, Doddaballapur - 561203**

Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank

Schedule - A : (Property Owned by Mr. Vishwanath, S/o. Shivanna)

Property Situated at 4th Ward, Deshadapete, Doddaballapur - 561203, Old Khata No.2461, Present Khata No.85/79/3697/1, Present Khata SL No.350, measuring : East-West 8 feet and North-South 45 feet, Bounded by : East : Property of Item No.2, West : Properties of Channabasavaradya & Jayanna, North : Compound of Masjid, South : Road.

Schedule - B : (Property Owned by Mr. Vishwanath, S/o. Shivanna)

Property Situated at 4th Ward, Deshadapete, Doddaballapur - 561203, Old Khata No.2459, Present Khata No.80/75/3694/1, Present Khata SL No.349, measuring : East-West 22 feet and North-South 33 feet, Bounded by : East : Properties of Gajendra, Veerabhadraradya & Others West : Property of Item No.1, North : Property of Item No.3, South : Road.

Schedule - C : (Property Owned by Mr. Vishwanath, S/o. Shivanna)

Property Situated at 4th Ward, Deshadapete, Doddaballapur - 561203, Old Khata No.3694/3695/3697/3698/2, Present Khata No.77/74/3694, Present Khata SL No.348, measuring : East-West 15 feet and North-South 15 feet, Bounded by : East : Properties of Jayanna & others, West : Property of Item No.1, North : Compound of Masjid, South : Property of Item No.2. Total Extent of Land 1,311 Sq.Ft. RCC Ground Floor & First Floor Residential Building constructed therein.

Reserve Price : Rs.16,00,000/-
(Rupees Sixteen Lakh only) (For Schedule - A, B and C)

RE-AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
14-03-2025	**City Union Bank Limited, Doddaballapur Branch,** 1108/1116/925, Hungi Complex, Cinema Street, Doddaballapur, Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka - 561203. Telephone No.080-27622082, Cell No.9341673937.

Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale :

(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself / herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Doddaballapur Branch, 1108/1116/925, Hungi Complex, Cinema Street, Doddaballapur, Bengaluru Urban, Karnataka - 561203. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.,** together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact **Telephone No:080-27622082, Cell No :9341673937. (5)** The property/ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **01.00 p.m.** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 21-02-2025 **Authorised Officer**

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, **CIN -** L65110TN1904PLC001287, **Telephone No.** 0435-2402322, **Fax :** 0435-2431746, **Website :** www.cityunionbank.com

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RUSSIA LAUNCHES RECORD NUMBER OF STRIKE DRONES INTO UKRAINE

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said 267 drones were dispatched by Russia one day before the three-year anniversary of Moscow's invasion

FEARS OF FUTURE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION REMAIN

Three ballistic missiles had also been fired, Ukrain's air force said. One person was killed in a missile strike on the city of Kryvyi Rih. Zelenskyy has expressed fears that U.S. President Donald Trump pushing a quick resolution for the war would result in lost territory for Ukraine and vulnerability to future aggression from an emboldened Russia | P11

ZELENSKYY OFFERS TO QUIT IF IT BRINGS PEACE

- The attack came while leaders in Kyiv and across Europe are seeking to navigate changes in U.S. foreign policy under Trump
- Volodymyr Zelenskyy said at a news conference on Sunday that he is willing to give up his presidency in exchange for Ukraine's Nato membership, and he would quit if it led to peace for Ukraine

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DRONES SHOT DOWN OVER 13 UKRAINIAN REGIONS BY UKRAINE'S AIR FORCE

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Virat Kohli celebrates his 51st ODI century and India's victory over arch-rivals Pakistan alongside Axar Patel at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday | AFP

Kohli'noor': India rout Pak in lopsided clash

The 36-year-old becomes quickest to 14K ODI runs as Men in Blue win by six wickets

GOMESH S @ Chennai

IN the cricketing world, there isn't a bigger fixture than India-Pakistan. The stage, venue and format becomes secondary with theatre of sport taking centre-stage. However, as it has been the case in recent years, it ended up being yet another one-sided contest with Virat Kohli dominating Pakistan to hand India a six-wicket victory at the ring of fire in Dubai on Sunday. Like it was written in the stars, the India No 3 and former captain rose to the occasion, smashed a sensational century, his 51st in the format, and sealed a crucial win in the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy.

From the time he walked onto the field with a 242-run target in front, Kohli was a man on a mission. His first boundary took him to an exclusive club of 14,000 ODI runs — Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara are the other two. He is the quickest to reach there surpassing previous record held by Tendulkar. He held fort at one end, stuck to his innings-building template, bringing up his 82nd international hundred and India's victory with his last boundary in the 43rd over.

"Lost Rohit early, had to string a partnership, took learnings from the conditions, the understanding of how to go about things," Kohli told broadcasters after the victory.

If Kohli was the protagonist of the chase, it was the bowlers who set up the contest for the Men in Blue. From Hardik Pandya to Harshit Rana to Kuldeep Yadav, every one put the brakes on Pakistan through the middle-overs, ensuring that they did not post an above-par total on a typically slowish Dubai surface.

Coming into the match, India were overwhelming favourites on paper, with the conditions in front of them. Pakistan had their backs against the wall with the perfect opportunity to give something to cheer for the fans back home. However, what was supposed to be one of the greatest rivalries of this sport, ended up being yet another anti-climax as a far superior Indian team came together to hand the tournament hosts and defending champions a devastating defeat. P13

NO LIGHT YET AT END OF SRISAILAM TUNNEL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

WHILE rescuers race against time to save the eight workers trapped inside the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel — operations have been in full swing through Saturday night and are continuing — the situation has been billed as "critical" with the fate of the victims unknown.

On Sunday, personnel from the Army, NDRF, SDRF and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) travelled 13 km into the tunnel and are believed to have reached within a few metres of the accident spot. However, the huge volume of debris from the caved-in tunnel and water that seeped in hindered rescue operations.

Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, who went deep inside the tunnel, said the final 200 meters stretch of the collapsed section of the tunnel has been filled with water and silt. "The force of water that entered the tunnel was such that the boring machine, which weighs hundreds of tonnes was swept away up to 150-200 metres," he said. The minister said rafts were being used to move about in the tunnel as parts of it were still waterlogged. Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy went inside the tunnel too. On the chances of survival of the workers, Rao said: "We can't say anything but we will spare no effort (to save the workers)... we are hopeful." Preliminary reports suggested that the force of the water was the reason for the collapse of the tunnel roof. Sasi, a junior engineer with the irrigation department who narrowly escaped being trapped, said water suddenly entered the tunnel with immense force.

Rescue operations to evacuate the eight workers continue at Srisailam Left Bank Canal project | EXPRESS

Rescue teams that managed to approach close to the accident spot called out the names of the trapped individuals, but there was no response.

The tunnel is being dug from two sides — Nalgonda district side and from Nagarkurnool side. The tunnel boring machine on the Nalgonda side was recently repaired, and officials were trying to get ball bearings from Chennai to restart the work. Boring started at the Nagarkurnool side (inlet point) on February 18. Workers had dug 10 metres in five days before the accident.

NDRF deputy commandant Sukhendu Datta said dewatering process was continuing. "Once dewatering is completed, actual rescue operations will commence," he said.

Those with 'slave mentality' mock Kumbh: Modi

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hit out at the critics of Mahakumbh, saying only those with a 'slave mentality' can attack the country's religious and cultural traditions.

"There is a class of leaders who ridiculed religion and indulged in separating people. There was support for such individuals from foreign entities, as well as attempts to weaken the nation and religion," he said targeting a section of Opposition leaders but without taking names.

These individuals, he claimed, sought to defame the inherently progressive nature of India's ethos by attacking saints, culture, principles, traditions, festivals, and rituals.

"Many times, foreign powers too are seen trying to weaken the country and religion by supporting these people," Modi said at an event in Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday.

He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for Shree Bageshwar Medical Sciences And Research Institute, which will include a cancer hospital, in Chhatarpur.

His remarks come amid a row over some opposition leaders including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee criticizing the alleged administrative lapses leading to the stampede at the Kumbh Mela on January 29. Mamata had called the Maha Kumbh as Mrityu Kumbh and also accused the authorities of suppressing the casualties of the stampede.

He also announced plans to build cancer daycare centres in districts across the country over the next three years.

Bomb threat forces NY-Delhi flight to divert, land in Rome

SHEKHAR SINGH @ New Delhi

AN American Airlines flight from New York's John F Kennedy International Airport to Delhi was forced to make an emergency landing in Rome on Sunday night following a bomb threat. The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, with over 280 passengers aboard, diverted its course over the Caspian Sea before heading westward toward Italy.

According to flight tracking data, Flight AA292 took off from New York at approximately 8:30 pm on Saturday for its scheduled 14-hour journey to the Indian capital. However, around 10 hours into the flight, the aircraft executed an abrupt turn near the Black Sea, reversing its path before heading toward Rome's Fiumicino Airport.

Upon nearing Italian airspace, the plane was escorted by Italian fighter jets as a precautionary measure. It landed safely at 5:30 p.m. local time.While authorities have not disclosed the precise nature of the security alert, sources suggest that a bomb threat was received mid-flight.

The decision to divert to Rome instead of a closer landing site was attributed to American Airlines' established operational base in the Italian capital. Despite the severity of the threat, the aircraft's prolonged flight duration before diversion indicates that officials may have deemed the risk level manageable.

EXPRESS READ

Jammers in city jail trap residents in digi blackout

Bengaluru: Residents living near Bengaluru Central Prison at Parappana Agrahara are once again distressed due to the Tower Harmonics Call-Blocking System installed at the prison. Even residents using LAN WiFi are experiencing disruptions due to signal blockage from jammers over the past week. The core committee of the residents' association is planning signing a petition to demand the removal of jammers in the prison and will submit the petition to DGP prisons | P4

EXPRESS INTAKE

DKS checkmates critics, says will lead Cong in K'taka in 2028 | P6

Don't mention caste names in temple invite: HC to TN officials | P7

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 32 Indian fishermen hailing from TN | P7

Cong counters latest Tharoor 'row' by playing it down | P7

Chhattisgarh to harness ISRO technology innovations to boost key sectors | P10

NWKRTC SERVICES TO KOLHAPUR SUSPENDED, 4 BUSES PAINTED BLACK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

BUS services from Karnataka to Kolhapur in Maharashtra were temporarily suspended after tension escalated along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border after a bus conductor of North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) was assaulted for refusing to speak in Marathi with a passenger at Balekundri village of Belagavi taluk.

The incident sparked widespread protests, leading to the disruption in interstate bus services. But buses on Kagwad-Miraj, Chikkodi-Ichalkaranji and other routes from Belagavi and Chikkodi bus depots resumed normal operations. After Shiv Sena, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) activists blackened Karnataka buses at Nashik and Pune in Maharashtra. They spray painted 'Jai Maharashtra' and 'MANASE' in Marathi on the buses. Three buses were blackened in Pune on Sunday. On Saturday, Shiv Sena activists tied Saffron flags to Karnataka buses at Kolhapur.

On the Karnataka side, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike activists blackened a Maharashtra bus and also the face of the bus driver at Chitradurga on Friday night. The suspension of bus services to Kolhapur badly impacted daily commuters on both sides of the border. They could be resumed depending on the situation, which is being monitored closely, said Chikkodi Divisional Controller M Shashidhar.

Rajesh Huddar, divisional controller, NWKRTC, Belagavi, said, "The bus service is normal except to Kolhapur, where it was affected from Sunday morning till afternoon, as Shiv Sena planned a protest. On an average, 90 buses are operated to Maharashtra from Belagavi. We are operating the services by coordinating with depot managers of respective cities in Maharashtra to prevent damage to buses and safety of bus drivers and conductors. Four buses were smeared with black paint on Saturday night." Chikkodi NWKRTC subdivision normally operates 80 daily trips to Kolhapur and other cities. P6

> **The bus service is normal except to Kolhapur, where it was affected from Sunday morning till afternoon, as Shiv Sena planned a protest**
>
> Rajesh Huddar, divisional controller, NWKRTC, Belagavi

A KSRTC bus that was spray painted with pro-Marathi slogans at Nashik in Maharashtra on Sunday

ಭಾರತೀಯ ಮಾನಕ ಬ್ಯೂರೋ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಶಾಖಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ
भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो
बेंगलूरु शाखा कार्यालय
BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS
Bengaluru Branch Office
सत्यमेव जयते

MANAK MANTHAN
ON

Draft IS : Domestic Gas Stoves With Ceramic Burner For Use With Liquefied Petroleum Gases — Specification

Draft IS : Domestic Gas Stove And Built In Hob For Use With Lpg — Specification (sixth Revision)

IS 2347 : Draft Amendment No. 2 To Domestic Pressure Cooker — Specification (seventh Revision)

Date: 26-02-2025
Time: 10:30 a.m

Venue: Training Hall,
Bureau of Indian Standards, Bengaluru Branch
Opp. Jalahalli Metro, Peenya Industrial Area 1st Stage
Tumkur Rd, Vivekananda Nagar, Peenya
Bengaluru, Karnataka 560058

Scan For Registration

bnbo@bis.gov.in www.bis.gov.in

भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो
Bureau of Indian Standards
उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
Government of India
Peenya Industrial Area, 1st Stage, Tumkur Road, Bengaluru - 560058.

Marks of Trust
22K916 For 22 Karat Jewellery
XXXXXX 6 Digit Alphanumeric Number (HUID)
IS/ISO 9001

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU

ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 24.02.2025 • Year: Krodhi • Ayana: Uttarayana • Ritu: Sishira • Masa: Magha • Paksha: Krishna • Tithi: Ekadasi 10.31 am • Nakshatra: Purvashada 4.18 pm • Moon in Makara Rashi • Rahukaala: 07.30 am to 09.00 am • Gulikakala: 01.30 pm to 03.00 pm • Yamaganda: 10.30 am to 12.00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 18°C | MAX 31°C
FORECAST
Morning clouds

Sunrise 06.38 am
Sunset 06.27 pm
Moonrise 03.27 am
Moonset 02.57 pm

CONNECTIVITY CRUMBLES

Phone jammers in jail trap residents in digital blackout

Residents face interruptions in network, struggle to receive OTPs, WiFi calls unreliable

RAKSHITH GOWDA @Bengaluru

RESIDENTS living near Bengaluru Central Prison at Parappana Agrahara are once again distressed due to the Tower Harmonics Call-Blocking System (T-HCBS) installed at the prison. Even residents using LAN (Local Area Network) WiFi are experiencing disruptions due to signal blockage from jammers over the past week.

Atish Bandyopadhyay, a software engineer and resident of Boston Block in Parappana Agrahara, opposite the prison, told TNIE that the prison department may have increased the amplitude of jammers, causing difficulties for residents in making WiFi calls. Residents are already facing call interruptions and are struggling to receive OTPs, which affects online banking. Now, even WiFi calls are unreliable, making everyday tasks and communication even harder. He also noted that most residents rely on routers at home to make calls. The core committee of the residents' association is planning signing a petition along with representatives of Kudla residents to demand the removal of jammers in the prison and will submit the petition to DGP prison.

Additionally, the committee has decided to stage protests in the next few days under the banner 'Say No to Jail Jammer Towers (T-HCBS)'. They argue that poor network coverage disrupts online classes, emergency services, food deliveries, and UPI payments, severely impacting daily life.

Santhosh, another resident, said, "It is the duty of prison staff to ensure that inmates do not have access to communication devices. If they do their job properly, there would be no need for jammers. Instead, these jammers not only cut off inmates from the outside world but also infringe on our rights. With many residents working in IT and ITeS companies, we are struggling to work from home or even do something as basic as ordering food online."

On X, Arivarasu urged the Office of the OSD to the Karnataka CM stating, "We have received no updates regarding the HCBS jammer, which is affecting thousands of people. With exams approaching, many students are unable to study online."

In another post, he highlighted a tragic incident from a few months ago when a man died because an ambulance could not be called due to the network blackout. "If Tihar jail, spread across 400 plus acres, has just one jammer, why should Bengaluru Central jail require multiple jammers?" he questioned.

Lack of parking at Metro stns irks public

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

DESPITE frequent discussions about last mile connectivity, a fundamental necessity—parking—remains absent at a significant portion of the Metro network. Out of the present 68 operational stations, 14 lack designated parking spaces, leaving commuters with limited options. While three of these stations may get parking facilities over time, the rest will remain without this amenity, said top officials of the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL).

Garudacharpalaya and Sri Sathya Sai Hospital Metro stations on the Purple Line are the latest stations to be added to the 'non parking station list', though they both had parking spaces initially.

A senior official told TNIE, "A year after bagging the contract, the licensees at both the stations cited their inability to run the facility profitably and have reneged on their contract. Most commuters were not using the facility. Since they walked out of the contract mid-way, we had to blacklist them. Despite two rounds of tendering, there has been no response," he said. BMRCL has now handed over the space to the team for property development, the official added. Only Metro staff are presently allowed to park their vehicles at these stations.

The other Metro stations with no parking space are MG Road, Cubbon Park, Vidhana Soudha, Sir M Visvesvaraiah, Gorguntapalaya, Yeswanthpur, Srirampura, KR market, Lalbagh, South End Circle, RV Road, Benniganahalli and Srirampura, said an official and added that the parking at Benniganahalli has been temporarily shut. "In Benniganahalli, one of the newer stations, we closed the parking facility as work related to escalators is presently on. It will be reopened when that job is completed," said another official.

In RV Road Metro station, the tender will be called soon so that the facility is opened before the Yellow Line is launched. "In Srirampura, we have identified land where parking can be opened and we will call tenders for it shortly," he added.

In the CBD area, Gorguntapalaya and Yeshwanthpur, space is just not available near stations for parking. "In case some land is available, the price quoted for the land is exorbitant. Hence, it will not be possible to have parking facility in these stations," he explained.

Drinking water wastage, 112 cases booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WITH summer approaching and many parts of the city staring at possible water crises, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has cracked down against unnecessary wastage of drinking water, registering 112 cases in the past week and collecting fines amounting to Rs 5.60 lakh.

The water board had issued a circular on February 17, to curb the misuse of drinking water and ensure an adequate supply for all residents. Accordingly, it has intensified its campaign against the unnecessary wastage of drinking water. BWSSB officials have identified and penalised 112 violations.

The South Zone recorded the highest number of cases at 33, followed by the West Zone and East Zone with 28 cases each, and the North Zone with 23 cases. Fines have been imposed, and steps are being taken to recover the penalties from offenders, an official release stated.

Under Sections 33 and 34 of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Act, 1964, the use of drinking water for activities such as vehicle cleaning, gardening, construction, entertainment, decorative fountains, and other non-drinking purposes in cinema halls and malls is prohibited. Despite these regulations, many individuals and entities have continued to misuse clean water, ignoring the looming water crisis, the release added.

BWSSB Chairman Dr Ram Prasath Manohar emphasised that drinking water is transported to Bengaluru from nearly 100 kilometers away, making it a precious resource. He urged the public to avoid wastage and collaborate with the Board to ensure equitable water distribution to all areas and residents in need.

The Chairman also added that the fine campaign would be expanded in the coming days to further deter water misuse.

COINS OF TIME

Numismatists check old stamps and coins during the 16th National Numismatic Exhibition-2025 at Shikshak Sadan in Bengaluru | ALLEN EGENUSE J

Fare hike keeps public away from Metro: Experts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

EXPERTS and the public expressed their concern over the recent Metro fare hike and reiterated the need to withdraw it to promote public transport and reduce traffic congestion in the city. Over 200 people took part in the 'Citizens Convention against Metro fare hike' organised by the Bangalore Metro Commuters Association (BMCA) on Sunday

Prof Ashish Verma of Department of Transportation Systems Engineering, IISc, said three core functions need to be performed by a public transportation system — providing affordability and accessibility, solving traffic congestion problem, and reducing air pollution by cutting down on the usage of private vehicles. "The fare hike by Metro negates these aspects and impacts the quality of life of Bengalureans," he said, adding that share of public transport, including walking and cycling, in any city should be almost 80%. "It is the social obligation of the government to provide affordable transport to the public. They have forgotten their core function," Prof Verma said.

Dr Sudha Kamath, president of Medical Sciences Centre, Karnataka, said that Bengaluru was called the 'Pensioners Paradise', but now is plagued by respiratory illness owing to traffic congestion and pollution. "The corporatisation of public transport, similar to the health sector, should not be permitted," Dr Sudha said.

VN Rajashekhar of Save Bangalore Committee, said that the methodology adopted of adding the infrastructure cost and interest amount when calculating the hike was completely unjustified. "If we adopt this method to effect fare hikes, then by 2029-2030, the loan amount and interest to be paid will touch Rs 2,780 crore. BMRCL would have to earn a daily revenue of Rs 7.8 crore to make up for it as compared to the Rs 3 crore it is targeting presently. Then the fares would have to be hiked abnormally," he said.

A core committee of BMCA comprising 25 individuals has been formed to take the movement forward, said M N Sriram, adviser, to the committee.

Meghana Verma, Head of the Centre for Sustainability at the Ramaiah Institute of Management and a researcher on Gender Inclusive Mobility, billed the fare hike as "a gross injustice." People With Disabilities or those in the lower income group hardly use the Metro as they felt the previous fare itself was high, she said based on her research. "By hiking the fare, BMRCL has made it impossible for them to use this mode of public transport," she added.

M Pavithra, a participant said, "BMRCL should look at other avenues of income like exploiting the space inside stations to rent it out to branded stores. Some stations in Hyderabad Metro remind one of airports where shopping can be done."

Prof Ashish Verma; Dr Sudha Kamath, president of Medical Service Centre, Karnataka; Prof Meghna Verma, and others during the 'Citizens Convention against Metro fare hike' organised by Bangalore Metro Commuters Association| ALLEN EGENUSE J

At 33.2°C, it already feels like summer in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

WHILE the official onset of summer in the Garden City begins in early March, Bengalureans have already begun to feel the heat in February. According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru Urban on Sunday recorded a maximum temperature of 33.2 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature stood at 19.7 degrees. With IMD predicting that Bengaluru weather will continue to be dry, citizens are taking measures to keep themselves hydrated. "Usually, winter comes to an end post Shivaratri, paving way to summer, however, things are changing and the weather in February feels like peak summer. I try to avoid venturing out during the noon, as it is scorching hot. If I have to step out, I ensure to apply sunscreen, carry an umbrella and a water bottle to keep myself hydrated," said Darshini, a college student.

"While Coastal Karnataka might experience light rain, the city will continue to be dry throughout this week," said officials from IMD Bengaluru. They added that there will be partly cloudy skies with fog/mist in the early morning hours in some areas till February 27. The maximum temperature in the city is predicted to be 33 degree Celsius and the minimum temperature will be 19 degree Celsius.

PES Polytechnic Auto Expo 2025 held

Bengaluru: PES Polytechnic held a two-day event- Auto Expo 2025, an exhibition cum sales of electric, petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicle on February 22 at PES Hanumanthnagar Campus, Bengaluru. Speaking at the inauguration, Prof D Jawahar, Pro Chancellor, PES University said the society should consider buying electrical vehicles rather than relying on petrol or diesel vehicles which cause pollution. He announced that the PES Management will provide incentive to PES staff who are interested in buying electric cars. The expo will be open to the public on Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

24TH February : I should say a word about Jupiter's current creative location. A planetary position like this says a lot about the state of the world. In fact this looks like a fine moment for philosophical thought, for weighing up the odds, and for reaching critical decisions in line with what's best for everyone. At least, that's the theory.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
A decided dearth of interesting lunar alignments today means that you can take time off, so that if you do have a lot on your plate, then it's because you failed to say 'no' when you had the chance. It also indicates that the choice lies with you, and this is one of those times when you may make your own future.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
It's a week for radical and romantic decisions, a time to be open about your ideas, and not to allow anyone to put you down. You may not be right in other people's eyes, but you know the truth when you see it. You'll only run into trouble when partners are equally convinced that they are correct!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
There still seems to be a great deal to be said for keeping yourself to yourself. However, as the Moon reaches a dramatic relationship to your sign, you will be encouraged to spill the beans. If you have a weakness, then it's probably over-confidence.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Venus, planet of love, inclines you to out-and-out romance, but Mercury, ruler of communication, means that what you'll really want out of friendships are shared interests and good conversation. Sheer passion may not be enough. But I think you knew that already!

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Some of your planets are careful, hard-working and cautious, while others are desperate to be dynamic, reckless, adventurous, optimistic and a touch excessive in all areas of life. As from now, you are to be plunged into a whirlwind of excitement - but slowly!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Much has been said about your willingness to be walked over and exploited. The fact is that over the next few weeks, perhaps more than ever before, you will be called upon to put yourself out for others. If the stars offer you any advice then it is to help the people who deserve it, and steer clear of those who are ready to take advantage.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Whether at work or at home, it's not only a question of who you know, but how well you get on with them! Above all, you should see to it that a pleasant compromise is reached. You'll get your reward next week. In the meantime, take delight in any good fortune which alights on people close to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You'll have to deal with the week's domestic arrangements today, but on the deeper level, it's time to enhance and express your reputation as a healer of the spirit as well as of the body. And, as it happens, your financial stars are also looking fairly shrewd!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
If you don't know what's going on today, and everything seems to be irrational and deeply suspicious, that's only to be expected! Spend a little time getting to the bottom of one particular mystery. You might even find that someone is being terribly reasonable, just for a change.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Other people are naturally sweet-tempered. If they're not, it may be because of something you've said or done, which means that the solution lies in your hands, even if it is now too late to get back to where you started! And if you can't turn the clock back then at least make sure that you don't make the same mistake again.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
You may devote more attention than normal to developing a co-operative family-like atmosphere at work, and if you're not gainfully employed, press ahead with ambitions to enhance your status in the community. And, at home, take control and try to set higher standards.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
You have a reputation for not liking hard work. That is a pity, because over the near future you may be busier than you've been for a very long time, but it will all be extremely worthwhile in the end. You can cut down on wasted effort by organising your time better.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

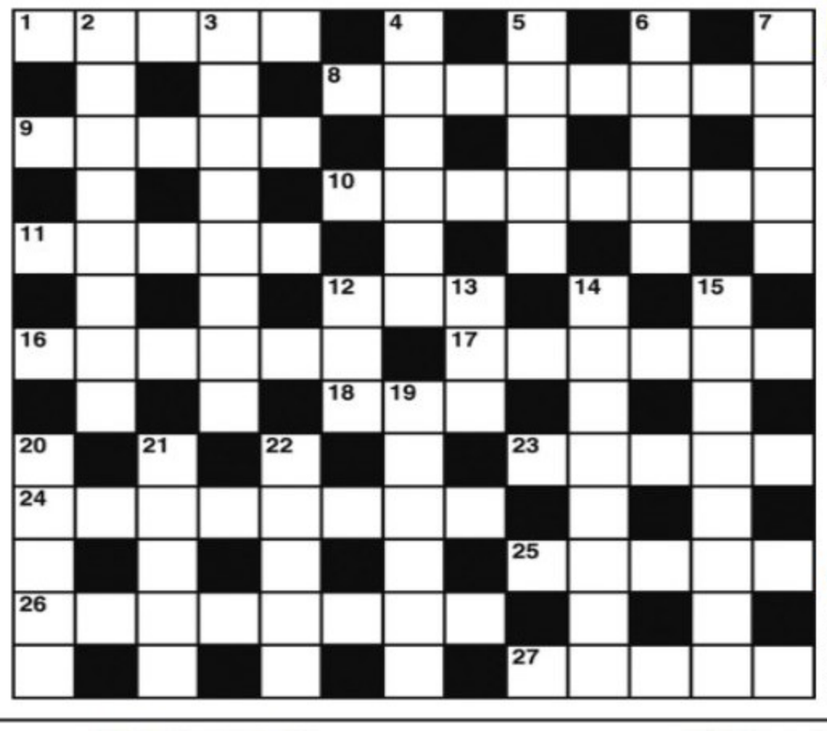
4		9			8		3	
	8		2					
				5			2	
1			5		2	9		
8								6
		3	4		9			8
	4			9				
					3		1	
	3		8			7		9

7	5	2	9	4	3	1	8	6
9	1	6	8	5	7	3	4	2
8	4	3	6	1	2	7	9	5
6	9	7	5	3	8	2	1	4
1	3	4	7	2	9	6	5	8
2	8	5	1	6	4	9	7	3
3	7	9	2	8	5	4	6	1
5	2	1	4	9	6	8	3	7
4	6	8	3	7	1	5	2	9

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Just a little finger (5)
8 Dad's skin is fair (8)
9 Quietly leave the podium in disapproval (5)
10 Get ready for the night (8)
11 Recorder has to come to the point (5)
12 Are taken back a number of years (3)
16 Partly concoct a volume having a certain page size (6)
17 Faint sound of mouse having narrow escape (6)
18 What cat sometimes takes on the carpet (3)
23 It's an odd sort of stuff (5)
24 Reckless injunction to keep increasing the rent (8)
25 Get less in sum unfortunately (5)
26 They may cover us if our facts are wrong (3,5)
27 Messenger from a strange land (5)

DOWN
2 I leave the law to the big guns (8)
3 Reason and style for walking across water (8)
4 Profession has run rapidly out of control (6)
5 Sunbathed topless as requested (5)
6 Cancel space flight due to bad smell in craft (5)
7 Prevent animal swallowing the tin opener (5)
12 One form of eternity (3)
13 Serpent has poisonous fangs in part (3)
14 Time turns around it (8)
15 A certain laxity allowed in angular measurement (8)
19 Commercials about smart fashions (6)
20 People in office? (5)
21 One fat round Scotsman (5)
22 He explored Canada initially with a repaired boat (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Flea market, 6 Eric, 10 Loser, 11 School cap, 12 Emphasis, 13 Maori, 15 Aunties, 17 Signora, 19 Boycott, 21 Pensive, 22 Drama, 24 Crude oil, 27 In the news, 28 Nears, 29 Earl, 30 Estaminets.

Down: 1 Fold, 2 Easy money, 3 March, 4 Resists, 5 Ephesus, 7 Recto, 8 Captivates, 9 Tommy gun, 14 Barbed wire, 16 Isolated, 18 Originate, 20 Tickets, 21 Prussia, 23 Alter, 25 Ennui, 26 Isis.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

TDIWH

EOYRF

AROSBB

GHUFOT

That's a good way to start.
Nice hit!
Forget about it.
I'll
12
30
SHE HIT A HOME RUN ON THE FIRST PITCH OF THE GAME. THE SCORE WAS 1-0 ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

_____ _____ THE _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: GOURD WIPER COBALT FLURRY
Answer: As "The Wave" went around the stadium, whole sections of fans were — UPROOTED

A 27-year-old from Devlapur (Bailhongal taluk) was murdered, and his body was found in a river near Nayanagar on Saturday. The deceased, Sagar Dundappa Ambershetty, was employed at a private company. He is survived by his parents, brother, and sister. Initial findings suggest that Sagar was strangled, as evident from the rope marks on his neck. It is suspected that he was killed and then thrown under the bridge

FIRE DEPT RECEIVES 80% OF CALLS IN FIRST 5 MONTHS OF YEAR

Highest number of fire calls recorded in March, followed by February; Property over ₹330 crore lost in fire accidents in 2024

RAKSHITH GOWDA @ Bengaluru

THE Fire Department receives 80% of fire calls in the first five months of the year. According to data from the Fire and Emergency Services, the department received 23,832 fire calls in 2024, with 18,900 between January and May. As the summer season begins, the department experiences a surge in fire incidents.

Last year, 48 people lost their lives due to fire accidents in the state, while 201 people were injured. Property worth over Rs 330 crore was lost in these accidents. Bengaluru alone received 2,947 calls, resulting in 13 deaths and several injuries.

A senior department officer said the highest number of fire calls was recorded in March (5,700), followed by February (4,800), April (4,700), January (2,000), and May (1,700). The least number of calls was recorded in June and July (400 each).

Fire & Emergency Services Department Director TN Shivashankar said major causes of fire are electrical short-circuits, while there is a decline in fire incidents due to gas cylinder and LPG leaks, industrial fires and chemical fires in the state.

"Summer months are the busiest for us. Our men are always prepared to rush as soon as we get an alert," he said.

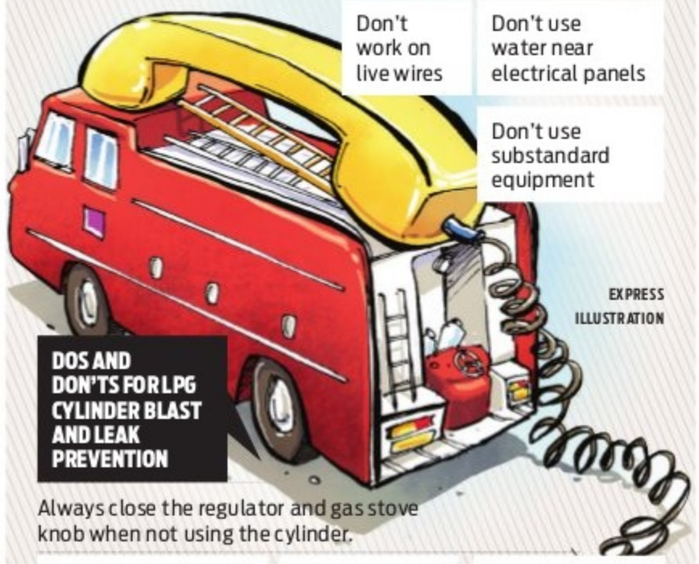
Noting that close to Rs 1,000 crore worth of property was lost in the last three years, Shivashankar said just by being alert, a majority of fire accidents can be averted. He added that the department conducts fire awareness programmes on fire prevention and evacuation methods. These programmes include two-day and one-day training sessions at the RA Mundkur Academy on Bannerghatta Road. Additionally, fire personnel visit high-density residential and industrial areas to raise awareness about fire safety through mock drills and fire prevention demonstrations, he added.

Another senior officer said fire accidents can be significantly reduced if people are more aware of fire safety measures. He stated that human negligence is a major cause of fire mishaps. "For instance, 99 per cent of LPG cylinder leaks and blasts occur only in mornings. It can be prevented if people turn off the gas knob after every use and regularly check regulators and hoses for damage."

He added that North Karnataka districts with forests receive high number of fire calls.

FIERY FACTS

Year	Fire call	Death	Injured	Lives saved	Property loss (In Rs)
2022	17,074	45	300	772	238,94,49,453
2023	28,718	76	221	123	404,45,70,564
2024	23,832	48	201	21	330,26,68,798


DOS AND DON'TS FOR ELECTRICAL SHORT CIRCUITS AND ELECTRICAL FIRE
Avoid plugging too many devices into a single circuit to prevent overheating. Don't Use Faulty or Damaged Wires
Don't work on live wires
Don't use water near electrical panels
Don't use substandard equipment
EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION
DOS AND DON'TS FOR LPG CYLINDER BLAST AND LEAK PREVENTION
Always close the regulator and gas stove knob when not using the cylinder.
Always use government-approved ISI-marked LPG cylinders, regulators, and hoses.
Inspect the gas pipe regularly and replace it if it's cracked or damaged hoses
Avoid switching on or off electrical devices in case of leak, as sparks can ignite fire.

TDR SCAM CASE

Spl court questions IO for giving go-by to accused

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

THE special court for Lokayukta cases pointed out that investigation officers, giving a go-by to accused top officials while filing chargesheets in most cases, depend on the status, position, power and influence of the culprits without assigning any reasons. This despite incriminating materials against them, said the court and directed the Lokayukta DGP to take up further investigation into the multi-crore Transferable Development Rights (TDR) scam in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and submit the report within two months.

Judge KM Radhakrishna passed the order, while rejecting the application filed by four accused to discharge them from the case taken up suo motu in 2019 with respect to TDR in Kowdenahalli village in Bengaluru East taluk. The chargesheet was filed by then SP Uma Prashanth of the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The court, however, discharged Geetha HR, Assistant Engineer, BBMP, from the case.

"The note sheet found on pages 1277 to 1307 of Book-C in the chargesheet, prima facie unfurls the involvement of not only accused No 1 to 8, 10 but also officials of the TDR section of Mahadevapura. Particularly, the Superintending Engineer (Road Infrastructure), Deputy Commissioner, Joint Commissioner, Additional Commissioner including Special Commissioner (Planning) and Commissioner of BBMP by involving the village accountant, surveyor, assistant revenue officer of Horamavu and others, in committing the alleged offences. The most unfortunate action on the part of the investigation officer is giving go-by to all these officials and laying the chargesheet with incomplete investigation against accused No 1 to 8, 10 and 11. No reasons are assigned by her to ignore those against whom incriminating materials are forthcoming," the court said.

Stating that it is for the investigating officer to introspect and explain the reasons, the court observed that this is what investigation officers are doing in most cases, depending on the status, position, power and influence of real culprits. Such an approach needs to be curtailed to ensure faith and transparency in the system. The investigation in this case is obviously incomplete and warrants further investigation to ensure effective justice in the true sense, it added.

Uma Prashanth in the chargesheet against 11 accused, alleged that in 2009, the BBMP had notified 652 square metres of portions of houses and buildings on Survey No. 7 at Kowdenahalli and acquired them to widen TC Palya and Varanasi roads. Accused from Numbers 1 to 11 conspired with a common intention to get wrongful gain, manipulated, created and forged documents in the name of the 1st accused, in collusion with TDR agents, in violation of government orders, notifications and rules, the chargesheet read.

They projected the excess land and fixed inflated rates for 2012-13 rather than the applicable rates of 2013-14 to the extent of crores of rupees. They caused a monetary loss to the true owners of the notified area as well as BBMP by suppressing the truth, it stated.

Rowdy-sheeter murdered by gang in Ashoknagar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 38-year-old rowdy-sheeter was brutally murdered by a gang of armed assailants. The incident took place near Garuda Mall in the Ashok Nagar police station limits in the wee hours of Sunday. Old rivalry is suspected to be the reason.

The deceased has been identified as Haider Ali, a resident of Anepalya. He had been involved in criminal activities since 2014. A rowdy sheet was opened against him at the Ashok Nagar police station, with 11 cases registered against him across various police stations in the city, including attempt to murder, theft, and robbery.

As the news of his murder spread, Ali's supporters gathered near the Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital, some allegedly brandishing machetes, creating a ruckus and shouting near the hospital premises. It is reported that Ali's brother was associated with a political party.

According to the police, around 1.30 am on Sunday, Ali was returning home from a pub on Church Street. He was riding pillion with his friend. A gang of bikers followed their two-wheeler till Garuda Mall, where a car parked earlier intercepted their bike. Ali's friend was slapped by the assailants and Ali was stabbed by one of them. As Ali fell of the bike, the assailants hacked him to death using lethal weapons and escaped from the scene.

The police further added that Ali's friend, along with passersby, rushed him to hospital, but doctors declared him brought dead due to severe stab wounds and head injuries. It is suspected that the motive behind the murder to be an old rivalry. The attack was so brutal that over 50 injury marks were found on Ali's body, the police added.

Speaking to reporters, Deputy Commissioner of Police of Central division, Chandrashekar HT, said on Sunday that two special teams have been formed to investigate the case and nab the assailants. A case has been registered at Ashok Nagar police station based on a statement given by Ali's friend. The police are analysing CCTV footage, and further investigation is underway.

50% infertility cases linked to male factors: Docs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

"RECENT studies suggest that 40-50% of infertility cases are linked to male factors. Over the last decade, we have witnessed a steady rise, particularly among younger men," said Dr Praveen Joshi, Organising Chairman, Comprehensive Infertility Conclave (CIC) 2025. He was speaking at CIC 2025, organised by Global Healthcare Academy, held here on Sunday, where experts emphasised the need for early diagnosis and comprehensive fertility care, as infertility is becoming a growing concern among couples in India. They laid stress on early diagnosis and comprehensive fertility care.

On the increasing and worrying trend of infertility in urban areas, Dr Joshi said, "Contributing factors for male infertility include low sperm count, poor motility, hormonal imbalances and genetic conditions. Lifestyle habits like smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity and prolonged exposure to heat and radiation are also contributing to the rise in male infertility."

Additionally, rising pollution levels in cities like Bengaluru have been linked to declining sperm health, Dr Praveen said.

Addressing female infertility, the organising secretary of CIC 2025, Dr Meghana Nyapathi said, "According to the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) (2019-20), infertility affects about 18.7 of every 1,000 married women aged 15–49 who have been married for at least five years. Some regions, like Goa, Lakshadweep and Chhattisgarh, have even higher rates. In Karnataka, the District Level Household and Facility Survey (DLHS) showed that around 5.9% of ever-married women face infertility issues, with slightly higher numbers in rural areas (6.1%) than in urban pockets (5.5%)."

"These differences highlight the urgent need to improve reproductive healthcare for women across different regions. Despite advancements in reproductive medicine, infertility remains a stigmatised and underdiagnosed issue, particularly among men," said Dr B S Ajaikumar, Executive Chairman, HealthCare Global Enterprises Ltd, emphasising the importance of breaking societal taboos surrounding infertility.

THE MEN IN BLUE EFFECT

With the high-octane India-Pakistan clash in the ICC Championship Trophy, MG Road wears a deserted look on Sunday

16-MONTH-OLD BABY DIES IN BALLARI HOSP, PARENTS ALLEGE NEGLIGENCE OF DOCTORS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Ballari

A 16-month-old baby died in the Ballari Institute of Medical Sciences on Saturday and parents blamed it on negligence of the authority. They staged a protest against the authority by keeping the body at the hospital. Seven kids below 5 years of age died in two months at the hospital and after maternal deaths, now parents are worried about their children who are admitted in BIMS.

"Locals, including Ballari City MLA Nara Bharath Reddy, are not happy with the BIMS administration, but why the government has not taken any action against the authority," people ask.

"A 16-month-old baby of Ballari lost its life. BIMS authority denied the negligence and the baby was undergoing treatment with severe health issues and it was the main cause for the death of the baby," sources said.

One of the relatives of the deceased said,"On Thursday, our baby was admitted to BIMS due to fever. After taking admission, none of the doctors responded quickly and we requested to give treatment. The baby was admitted to ICU and after enquiry, the doctors said health condition was serious. On Saturday morning, the administration said the baby is no more. Due to the doctors' negligence, the baby died. We want justice and soon, we will submit a memorandum against BIMS authority and the government should take necessary action against the authorities."

Rajendra Reddy, a social activist, said, "In the last two months, more than seven children below the age of 5 died here. Soon, we will meet the health minister and ask him to take strict action against the BIMS authority," he said.

Woman brutally murdered over son's rivalry at Belagavi village

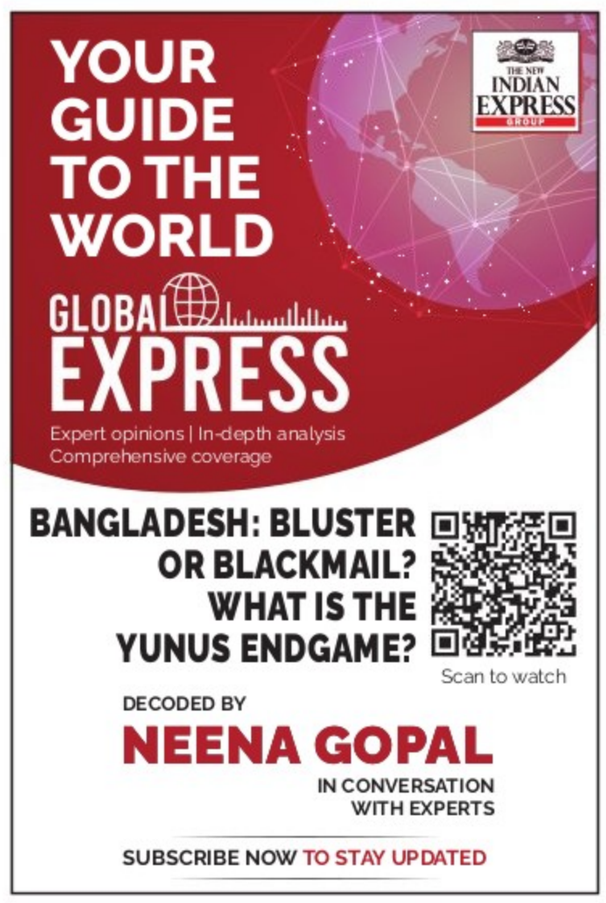
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

IN a shocking incident, a 45-year-old woman was brutally murdered in Kalahal village, Ramdurg taluk, due to a long-standing family feud that escalated over her son's actions.

The victim, Shekhavva Madar, was allegedly attacked with an axe by Manjunath Madar, a resident of the same village. According to the sources, the tensions between the two families had been simmering since 2018, when a violent altercation forced Shekhavva's family to relocate to Kagadal village in Savadatti taluk. Despite the move, Shekhavva frequently visited Kalahal to maintaining their ancestral home.

The latest conflict arose when Manjunath's sister got engaged to a young man from Bagalkot. However, Shekhavva's son reportedly sent a message to the groom, claiming to be in love with the bride-to-be, and the engagement was called off because of this, enraging Manjunath. On the day of the incident, Shekhavva had gone to Kalahal to collect ration supplies. Seizing the opportunity, Manjunath fatally attacked her with an axe, striking her on the head.

Following the murder, Sureban police took Manjunath into custody and conducted an investigation.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POSSESSION NOTICE

WHEREAS

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd., under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice dated 30.09.2024 calling upon the Borrower **Ms.Govardhana G**, W/o.Mr.G Krupanandha, R/a No.336/1, 7th A Main, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, Banashankari 3rd stage, Bengaluru-560 085 & surety **Mr.B Gurunath Naidu** R/a No.15, Devarabisanahalli, Near Ayyappa Temple,Belandur Post, Bangalore-560103 to repay the amount mentioned in the Demand Notice being Rs.17,76,489.45 (Rupees Seventeen Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Nine and Paise Forty Five) outstanding as on 11.09.2024 under Mortgage Loan A/c No.003432500000481 alongwith further interest & other charges respectively within 60 days from the date of the receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower & surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower & surety in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this 18th day of February 2025.

The Borrower & surety in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said Property and any dealings with the said Property shall be subject to the charge of Bharat Co-Operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, for an amount as mentioned above alongwith further interest & other charges respectively, less amount paid thereafter if any.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8)of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of property bearing **Site No.35,** Katha No.14/2 (earlier western portion of site No.14/2) situated at **Ittamadu village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore,** presently comes under the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike and bearing New BBMP Municipal Katha No.35/14-2 situated at **Bhuvaneswari Nagar, Ittamadu, Bangalore New BBMP Ward No.183, Chikkallsandra, Bangalore,** Measuring East to West 15-0 feet and North to South 40-0 feet in all measuring 600 sq ft alongwith 2-0 sq of AC sheet roofed, red oxide flooring house thereon and bounded by:

East : Remaining Portion of Same Property belongs to Smt.Rathnamma
West : Site No.36
North : Road (25 Feet Road)
South : Site No.44

Place : Bengaluru
Date : 18.02.2025

Sd/- **Chief Manager & Authorised Officer, Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd.**

Kannada Sahitya Parishat president Mahesh Joshi said Rashtrakavi Kuvempu condemned caste discrimination and superstition in society. "Kuvempu strongly condemned the caste system, rejected superstition and spread equality. He is a universal poet who spread the message of universal humanity," he said

STATE AFFAIRS

DKS CHECKMATES OPPONENTS, SAYS WILL LEAD CONG IN 2028

Deputy CM says he will be active in politics for another 8-10 years

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI
@Bengaluru

DEPUTY Chief Minister DK Shivakumar seems to have checkmated his party leaders, who wished to replace him as KPCC president, by stating that he will lead the party in the Assembly polls in 2028. Shivakumar said he will be active in politics for another 8-10 years.

His statements are being interpreted as a message to both his friends and foes within the party. It came at a time when the coterie of ministers around Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is trying to allegedly get Shivakumar replaced as KPCC president.

To a crowd that was chanting "DK, DK" at the state government employees' conference recently, he told, "You can raise such slogans when I win the next election and run the show under my leadership. My health is good and I will continue to be in politics for another 8-10 years. Have faith in me."

With Siddaramaiah declaring that he is unlikely to contest the next Assembly polls, Shivakumar has started projecting himself as the future leader who can call the shots within the party, said a Congress leader. "It will certainly boost the morale of his supporters, and send out a warning signal to second-line leaders, especially first-time MLAs, who want to contest the next Assembly election on a Congress ticket. Shivakumar, who is 62 years old, is hoping to be active like Siddaramaiah," observed one of Shivakumar's sympathisers.

According to political analysts, the young generation looks up to young and energetic leadership and Shivakumar has stressed that he is fit and fine, while indirectly comparing himself with his peers within the party who are getting old and in the twilight of their political careers. This will be Shivakumar's USP, they said.

Interestingly, he has managed to get his loyalist Manjunatha HS as the new president of Indian Youth Congress Karnataka unit. His staunch supporter and KPCC working president GC Chandrashekar, a two-time Rajya Sabha member, said Shivakumar has over two decades of active politics left in him. "We need the leadership of Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar forever as we cannot go for elections without their leadership. If we talk about health issues, Shivakumar can do politics for 20 years, not just 8-10 years," he remarked.

"There are still three-and-a-half years left for the election. Shivakumar is currently the KPCC president, and there is nothing wrong in him saying that. The KPCC president is the supreme leader of the party in the state. In my opinion, what he said should have been about local bodies and BBMP elections. We will face these elections under his leadership," he maintained.

Defending Shivakumar, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwar said there is nothing wrong in his statement. "What's wrong with it? Did you find anything wrong," he shot back at reporters.

DKS to meet Rahul, Kharge in Delhi on Feb 25

KPCC president and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar is likely to meet LoP in LS Rahul Gandhi and AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in New Delhi on February 25. On the pretext of inviting them for the foundation laying ceremony for the new Congress Bhavan, coming up on Race Course Road, Shivakumar is visiting high command leaders.

He is likely to discuss political developments in Karnataka and organisation of the party in the state for future polls. He is also scheduled to meet Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil and take up the issue of the Centre putting on hold the state's irrigation projects.

The delay in clearance for the Mekedatu balance reservoir and Kalasa Banduri projects and delay in releasing Rs 5,300 crore for the Upper Bhadra Project for which the Centre had made an allocation in the 2024-25 budget are likely to come for discussion.

> **We need the leadership of Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar forever as we cannot go for elections without their leadership. If we talk about health issues, Shivakumar can do politics for 20 years, not just 8-10 years** — Manjunatha HS, Youth Cong Karnataka chief and Shivakumar loyalist

Another held in bus conductor assault case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Belagavi

THE Marihal police have arrested another accused in connection with the recent assault on a NWKSRTC bus conductor, bringing the total number of arrests in the case to five.

The latest arrest is Mohan Hanchinmani (25), a resident of Balekundri village. Others arrested earlier are Tumari Dattu Chandgadkar (33), Rahul Raju Naidu (28) and Balu Suresh Gunjikar (28), all from Balekundri village in Belagavi taluk, along with a minor.

Meanwhile, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy confirmed that the injured bus conductor is recovering. "Our officials have visited him and enquired about his condition. I am in constant touch with the Belagavi police and am monitoring the investigation," he said.

He said he will pass through Belagavi on Monday en route to Mudhol for Ranna Utsava. "If necessary, I will visit Belagavi to personally enquire about the bus conductor's health and assess the situation," he added. The KSRTC managing director and senior officials are already on-site, closely monitoring the developments.

KRV chief slams MES

In a video statement, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) president Narayanagouda condemned the attack on the conductor, allegedly for refusing to speak in Marathi.

Narayanagouda accused the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) of escalating violent activities in Belagavi and demanded an immediate end to such incidents.

"The hooliganism of MES is on the rise. KRV has been fighting against MES for years and has successfully diminished their influence, which once extended across seven Assembly constituencies, the city corporation and local panchayats," he said.

Narayanagouda challenged MES leaders, saying, "I will visit Belagavi on Tuesday. If MES leaders have the courage, let's meet." He stressed that Belagavi remains an undivided part of Karnataka.

Will not tolerate assault on Kannada, Kannadigas: BYV

Bengaluru: BJP leaders have condemned the assault on an NWRTC bus conductor for refusing to speak in Marathi with a passenger in Belagavi taluk recently. BJP state president BY Vijayendra said they will not tolerate such assaults on Kannada and Kannadigas. "People stay in this land, enjoy all facilities from Karnataka and yet target and blame Kannada and Kannadigas. This conspiracy is not acceptable. This is a crime. There is a need to raise our voice on this and the government has to take action against such people," he said. BJP members are taking part in a Mysuru Chalo rally on Monday to condemn the recent Udayagiri police station incident where miscreants attacked the police. Senior BJP leader Basangouda Patil Yatnal said Belgavi is a part of Karnataka. "If Maharashtra demands Belagavi, then we have to demand Solapur and Sangli. This should not happen. Both the states should work towards farmers welfare, healthcare, employment and other issues and not goondaism. They should not damage public property," he said. "Let us learn to respect our boundaries and language." **ENS**

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot offers pooja at Basaveshwara Mutt temple in Kunigal taluk, Tumakuru district, on Sunday

World looking at India for spiritual, mental wellbeing, says governor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Tumakuru

KARNATAKA Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Sunday said that the world is looking towards India for spiritual and mental well-being, and the ongoing Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj is an example of this.

The Governor was speaking after inaugurating the newly constructed Navagraha temple and the new gopura of Sri Basaveshwara Mutt in Bidanagere of Kunigal taluk, Tumakuru district.

The Governor, who greeted the gathering in Kannada, said, "Bidanagere Basaveshwara Mutt is not only a religious place, but also a source of spiritual peace and inspiration for devotees and a centre of cultural and social inspiration for the community." The teachings of Lord Basaveshwara are relevant even today, he said.

"Our culture, which our sages and gurus have continuously protected since time immemorial, is eternal. Our culture has always inspired world brotherhood, world peace, world welfare, equality, and harmony," he added.

He said that sadhus, saints, acharyas, and sages have hoisted the flag of religion, culture, and spirituality on the world stage. "The world-famous 161-foot-tall Panchamukhi Anjaneya statue has been installed here, attracting devotees from all over the country and abroad. Those who come here have the darshana of Sri Shaneshwara Swamy and the Navagrahas. It is also known as the Shani Shingnapur of Karnataka. Sri Dhananjaya Guruji, the head of the mutt, is a thinker and a sensitive person besides being the custodian of the religion, culture, and spirituality. Being a multi-dimensional institution, this mutt has made a significant contribution to social progress. Here, thousands of devotees are given dasoha with annadanam daily. Many positive steps are being taken by the Guruji to help overcome the various problems prevalent in society," the Governor said.

'Rice for Feb, March to be given at a shot'

V VELAYUDHAM @Kolar

FOOD and Civil Supplies Minister K H Muniyappa on Sunday said rice under the Anna Bhagya scheme for February and March will be distributed together to beneficiaries and distributors have already been sent instructions in this regard.

Speaking to reporters, the minister said the Union government has agreed to sell rice to the state and so Karnataka will pay Rs 22.5 per kg and spend another Rs 2.50 a kg on transportation. So, each kg of rice will cost the state Rs 25 a kg.

Muniyappa also said every month, 2.10 lakh tonnes of rice are required under the scheme, which will benefit 4 crore people.

"The five guarantee schemes and the development works being taken up across the state are turning into a boon for the people. Opposition parties had made a hue and cry, stating that there were no funds for development works in the state as the entire funds were going for the five guarantees," he said. "The opposition has fallen silent now seeing the development works of the Congress government. They are not making any statements."

On the taluk and zilla panchayat elections, he said the Congress party is very strong in the state and people will support the Congress candidate and cited the three byepoll results.

What's behind Parameshwara's resignation remark?

Dr G Parameshwara launches his own brand of packaged drinking water 'Paramm' in Tumakuru on Sunday

Tumakuru: Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara's remark that he would resign as minister, made at a party workers' meeting in Koratagere recently, has created ripples in political circles. According to sources, he was not happy with his portfolio because the hectic schedule is making him unable to give enough time to party workers in the Koratagere Assembly constituency. The workers had qualms about him ignoring them after the 2023 Assembly polls. In a sarcastic vein, Parameshwara told them that he would resign if they wished him to do so. Parameshwara was representing the Madhugiri Assembly constituency (reserved for the SC category) as MLA, but switched to Koratagere in 2008 owing to the delimitation of the constituency and won. But in 2013, he lost despite leading the party as KPCC chief and running for the CM's post. CM Siddaramaiah's supporters had allegedly ensured his defeat. But he brokered peace and won the 2018 and 2023 Assembly polls. He is planning to switch to Tumakuru Assembly constituency in 2028 if the delimitation of the constituencies happens and is reserved for SC category. It might be one of the reasons he is allegedly ignoring the Koratagere Assembly constituency, a Congress leader told *TNIE*. **ENS**

K'taka competes with TN to get a piece of Hogenakkal tourism

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

TO boost tourism as well as encourage competition with neighbouring Tamil Nadu, the state tourism department is chalking out a detailed report to promote and develop Hogenakkal Falls in association with the forest department.

Tourists from Karnataka visiting the scenic waterfalls, created by the River Cauvery, go to Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu to enjoy coracle rides, trek and water sports. Though there is access from Karnataka too, there are restrictions as it is through the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary forest patch.

"We want to ensure that footfall to the location from the state increases. The location will be developed under a public-private partnership, involving the forest department. This will not just ensure healthy competition with Tamil Nadu, but will also boost tourism in the state," said a senior tourism department official.

The department officials are preparing a detailed project report worth Rs 12 crore to be placed before the government for clearance. The report includes the creation of a gazebo, a parking facility, a recreation centre, restrooms, food courts and other essential amenities. Along with this, a project report is also being prepared for the improvement of facilities at Gaganachukki and Barachukki waterfalls.

"The start of Gopinatham trails, setting up of guest house and trekking facilities by the forest department will only help improve the tourism potential of the area. A complete package can be offered to tourists. The location is ideal because of proximity to Bengaluru and Mysuru," the official said.

Another tourism official said there are also many instances in the past where tourists have complained to the department of being exploited and additional money being charged. "We have always turned them away stating that it is managed by the Tamil Nadu government. All the comments that were noted have been incorporated while chalking the DPR so that tourism in the area is effective," the official added.

Farmer Vishwanath of Shiraganahalli village in Harapanahalli taluk with his farm workers take a flight to Goa recently | EXPRESS

FARMER FLIES 10 WOMEN WORKERS TO GOA FOR TRIP

G SUBHASH CHANDRA @Davanagere

VISHWANATH, a farmer from Shiraganahalli village of Harapanahalli taluk near Davanagere, has been receiving accolades from all for taking his 10 women farm workers on a flight from Shivamogga to Dabolim in Goa on a tour of the beaches and tourist places.

After leaving his job as a police constable with the state intelligence department, Vishwanath turned to full-time farming on his 14-acre areca plantation. To keep his workers, all permanent employees at his farm, happy, he decided to fulfil their dream of flying in the metal bird.

Speaking to *The New Indian Express*, Vishwanath said, "I have the satisfaction of fulfilling the dreams of the women labourers who work in my farm at Shiraganahalli. They had a dream of flying in an aeroplane, and I have fulfilled it."

"Our original plan was to take them to Tirupati for darshan of Lord Venkateshwara, but due to Aero India, I changed my plan and we flew to Goa. Shivamogga is the nearest airport; hence, I made the best use of it," he said.

The women were apprehensive, being first-time flyers, during the plane's take-off and touchdown on the way to Goa, he said, adding that on the return journey, however, they were comfortable. "Their happiness on the trip knew no bounds," he added.

"We visited Calangute and Bhaga beaches and enjoyed a boat ride in the Mandovi river. We also went on a tour of Panajim city. The smiles on their faces were a joy, and I too was happy for making them happy," he said.

Asked about the difference in his life now compared to working as a police constable, he said becoming a farmer made him happy. "After I became a farmer, I am leading a healthier, tension-free life."

> **I have the satisfaction of fulfilling the dreams of the women labourers who work in my farm at Shiraganahalli. They had a dream of flying in an aeroplane, and I have fulfilled it** – Vishwanath, farmer

MLAs' kin tie the knot at mass marriage event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Raichur

IT was a union of two political families, but with a difference. Passing over the glitz and glamour of a high-profile wedding ceremony, R Satish Gouda, son of Maski MLA R Basanagouda Turvihal, and Aishwarya, daughter of Raichur Rural Assembly constituency MLA Basanagouda Daddal's brother, tied the knot along with 75 couples at a mass marriage programme.

Speaking at the event organised by the Amogha Siddeshwara Mutt in Turvihal town of Sindhanur taluk on Sunday, Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh appealed to the public to take advantage of the five guarantee schemes implemented by the Congress government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Niranjananandapuri Swamiji of Kaginele Kanaka Gurupeeth expressed appreciation for the services of the Amogha Siddeshwara Mutt.

Madaiah Guruvin of Amogha Siddeshwar Mutt, swamiji of various mutts, Minor Irrigation Minister N S Boseraju, Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Tangadgi, MP Rajashekar Hitnal, MLAs Basanagouda Daddal, R Basanagouda Turvihala, G Hampaiah Nayak, former MPs K Virupakshappa and BV Nayak, former ministers Amaregouda Bayyapur and K Shivanagouda Nayak and others were present.

During the programme, developmental works worth Rs 800 crore in Maski Assembly constituency was launched. A newly built Kanaka Bhavana by Amogha Siddeshwar Mutt was inaugurated. The statues of Kanakadasa and Sangolli Rayanna were unveiled.

Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh inaugurates the mass marriage programme in Turvihal town of Sindhanur taluk on Sunday

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee president YS Sharmila accused the State government of cheating chilli farmers with false assurances and sought to know why it failed to address the fluctuations of tomato prices and protect farmers' interests

TROUBLE AT SEA

Lankan Navy arrests 32 Indian fishers, seizes 5 boats

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Ramanathapuram

THE Sri Lankan Navy arrested 32 fishermen hailing from Rameswaram and seized five mechanised boats for alleged violation of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) early on Sunday.

Condemning the arrest, fisher associations in Ramanathapuram began an indefinite strike from Sunday.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin reiterated his request to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to convene the joint working group (JWG) to find a permanent solution to the vexatious issue. "I request you to take strong diplomatic efforts to prevent the arrests of our fishermen and to secure the release of all the apprehended fishermen and their fishing boats from the Sri Lankan authorities at the earliest," the CM added.

Around 450 mechanised boats had ventured into the sea from Rameswaram on Saturday night. It is learnt that the SL patrol unit chased away a cluster of Indian fishermen who were fishing near the IMBL, and caught five boats which remained in the Lankan waters. As many as 32 fishermen were arrested and handed over to the Mannar fisheries department for further legal proceedings.

Fishermen associations in Rameswaram also declared an indefinite strike, following which, over 700 boats were seen anchored in Rameswaram on Sunday.

Don't mention caste names in temple invite: HC to TN officials

'Fest must be inclusive, celebrated by all belonging to Hindu religion'

JEGADEESWARI PANDIAN
@Madurai

OBSERVING that temple festivals should be inclusive and celebrated by all people belonging to the Hindu religion, including those belonging to Scheduled Caste communities, the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court recently criticised the exclusion of an SC community from a temple festival invitation on the ground that they did not donate any money to the festival. It further ordered the authorities not to mention any caste names in the future invitations of the temple concerned.

A bench comprising justices MS Ramesh and AD Maria Clete passed the order on a petition filed by KP Selvaraj, president of the Naduvikottai Adi Dravidar Welfare Association, seeking a direction to print 'Adi Dravidars,' instead of 'Oorars' (referring to the villagers), in the invitation for the annual festival at the Pattukottai Nadiamman temple in Thanjavur.

The executive officer of the temple had included the names of various sponsors along with their caste names in the invitation, but had omitted the Adi Dravidar community by referring to them simply as 'oorars', saying they had not made any monetary contributions. Noting that a similar dispute arose at the same temple in 2009, for which a peace committee meeting was held, the judges criticised the manner in which Dalits are subsumed under the generic term of 'Oorar' denying them specific recognition, while dominant castes are explicitly identified and given visibility. It is strange that the executive officer, being a government officer, is supporting this, they added.

This selective visibility reinforces systemic inequality denying Dalits both social value, privacy and meaningful participation in society, Justice Clete, who authored the judgment, said. "The failure to explicitly recognise Dalits forces them into a dilemma - either accept invisibility or assert their caste identity to gain acknowledgment. True inclusivity must reconcile this contradiction by ensuring that Dalits have the right to be recognised without being compelled to declare their caste identity, thus balancing their dignity, privacy, and equitable participation in public religious affairs," the judge added.

The judges also opined that though the authorities may argue that there is no restriction on SC individuals from worshipping the deity or taking part in the festival, participation must be meaningful and substantive, not merely symbolic or tokenistic. The core issue is not nomenclature, so merely passing an order to include their name will not necessarily ensure them genuine participation and equality in the festival, the judges observed and passed the above order.

CHEER MODE ON!

Fans cheer for the Men in Blue at the Marina Beach in Chennai on Sunday during the match between India and Pakistan in the ICC Champions Trophy played in Dubai | ASHWIN PRASATH

EXPRESS READ

Natyanjali Festival in Chidambaram from February 26

Cuddalore (TN): The 44rd Natyanjali Festival, organised by Chidambaram Natyanjali Turst, will begin on February 26 at Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar Trust premises on South Car Street and will continue until March 2, said trust's secretary, advocate A Sambandham. "This year, the festival will feature various classical dance performances, including Bharatanatyam," he said.

Man mistaken for animal shot dead during hunting trip

Dhenkanal (Odisha): A hunting trip went wrong for a farmhouse owner in Dhenkanal after his brother-in-law shot him dead mistaking him for a wild animal in a forested patch near Phasi in the wee hours on Sunday. The victim is 47-year-old Gobinda Naik of Kalanga village. The accused, Ramesh Naik (45), has been arrested. Sources said the duo used to engage in poaching activities in forested areas.

Social media influencer held for promoting betting apps in Vizag

Visakhapatnam (AP): Visakhapatnam Cybercrime Police arrested social media influencer Vasupalli Nani for allegedly promoting online betting applications through YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Nani was found encouraging youth to participate in betting by claiming high profits. Influenced by his online promotions a victim lost a significant amount of money, falling into debt and suffering mental distress, said police.

Landslide survivors protest 'delayed' rehabilitation efforts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Kozhikode

TENSIONS escalated in Chooralmala in Kerala's Wayanad district on Sunday after police intervened in a protest led by landslide survivors.

The protesters, part of the Janashabdam collective, had planned to construct huts in a symbolic demonstration against the slow pace of rehabilitation and the lack of government action. As they gathered near the Bailey Bridge, the police efforts to halt their protest sparked a scuffle, with demonstrators and officers engaging in a tense altercation.

The protest aimed to highlight the ongoing frustration among the displaced families, who accuse the authorities of neglecting their needs.

The Janashabdam Action Committee organised the event, emphasising the delays in the second-phase rehabilitation list and the inadequate progress on providing permanent housing.

One of the key issues raised by the protesters was the reduction in land allocation per family. Initially promised 10 cents of land and a 1,000-sq-ft house, the survivors now face the prospect of only 5 cents. Additionally, the protesters voiced their frustration over the Union Government's failure to announce a relief package, despite the substantial donations collected to support the recovery efforts.

In total, Rs 780 crore has been raised for the victims, with some individuals highlighting that only a portion of these funds are being used for their rehabilitation.

They also criticised the government's shifting stance on rehabilitation eligibility. The original promise of full support for 792 affected families has dwindled, with fewer people now being recognised as eligible for help. Meanwhile, the Kerala government has released a second draft list of families eligible for rehabilitation, with 81 new names added to the list, bringing the total to 323 families.

The Mundakkai-Chooralmala landslides, which occurred on July 30 last year, claimed over 200 lives and displaced many more.

Survivors of Wayanad landslide protest at Chooralmala on Sunday | EXPRESS

Automated testing stns to check vehicles at 32 spots soon

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

TO gradually replace the manual inspection of vehicles at the Regional Transport Offices (RTO) that come for Fitness Certificates, the Karnataka Transport Department is establishing an Automated Testing Station (ATS) on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. The move aims to improve efficiency, and transparency and reduce corruption, as the automated testing station will directly issue pass or fail certificates. The state's first such station has been introduced in Nelamangala.

Sharing details about the stations with *TNIE*, Transport Commissioner Yogeesh AM said, "As of now, vehicles which come for the fitness certificate renewal are subjected to manual testing. We aim to embrace technology and migrate from manual testing to automated testing."

For private vehicles, the FC remains valid for 15 years from the date of registration of the vehicle and must be renewed every five years thereafter. In contrast, commercial vehicles must renew their FCs every two years if they are less than eight years old from the date of registration. Post eight years, renewals are required annually.

"Under the automated testing, vehicles will be completely tested by machines, leaving no scope for errors and human interventions. There will be multiple tests, ensuring that only the vehicles which are fit and following all the laid down norms are issued the pass certificates and can operate on roads." he added.Further, he said that the department plans to establish ATS facilities at 13 locations where land is available, implementing them under the DBFOT model. At 19 locations where land is not available, works will be executed under the BOO model, grouped into five clusters to enhance competitiveness.

TWO HELD FOR BEATING MAN WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES TO DEATH IN POLICE PRESENCE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

A lawyer and law graduate were arrested late Saturday night for allegedly attacking a man with mental illness near the Tambaram bus stand and causing his death, even as police were at the spot and attempting to defuse the situation.

Police said the duo attacked the man after he banged on the windows of their "new car". The attack culminated in them allegedly pushing the victim, 59-year-old Ranganathan, to the ground, leading to his death.

According to the police, Ranganathan of Ayanavaram, had a mental illness for which he was undergoing treatment for the past three years. On Saturday night, as he was allegedly coming in the way of vehicles and obstructing traffic, passersby alerted the police.

Two patrol officers arrived at the spot, took Ranganathan aside, and contacted his family. They learned that Ranganathan had left home a few days ago and that his family had been looking for him.

As the police were waiting with Ranganathan for his family members, a car occupied by Manikandan (33), a lawyer, and his friend Vinoth (28), a law graduate, stopped near them. The duo was heading to a family function and had stopped to buy bottles of water.

Police said Ranganathan ran toward the car and banged on the door. Manikandan and Vinoth got down and allegedly began attacking him, claiming that their car was new. Despite police intervention, Vinoth allegedly pushed Ranganathan to the ground, causing his head to hit a cement slab. He sustained severe injuries and was rushed to Chromepet Government Hospital where he was declared dead. The police then arrested Manikandan and Vinoth.

KSMCA GIVES ₹1CR CHEQUE TO CM'S RELIEF FUND

Bengaluru: Karnataka State Marketing Communication and Advertising Ltd, a State Government Enterprise, donated Rs 1 crore from its profits for the year 2023-24 to the Chief Minister's relief fund. Chairman Satish Krishna Sail along with MB Patil, Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries and Infrastructure Development presented the cheque in the presence of LK Atheeq, Additional Chief Secretary to CM, Mohammed Ateequlla Sharif Managing Director, KSMCA and PS Nandeesha, Deputy General Manager, KSMCA presented the cheque. KSMCA declared a dividend of Rs 5.29 crore for the financial year 2023-24.

Hindi letters erased from rly stn boards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Coimbatore, Tirunelveli

CONDEMNING the Union Government over the recent developments regarding NEP, a few DMK cadres erased Hindi letters from the railway station boards in Pollachi and Tirunelveli on Sunday.

A group of DMK cadres, Pollachi unit town secretary and Satta Thitta Thirutha Kuzhu, Thendral K Selvaraj, entered Pollachi junction at 7.25am, and painted black grease oil over the Hindi letters in the name board. "A railway police constable who was on duty the cadres to stop doing it. However, they did not and erased Hindi letters from three name boards in the station. Within an hour, we restored the letters," said a RPF officer.

DMK cadre deface a Hindi signage at Palayankottai railway station

Hours later, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) registered a case against five persons, including Selvaraj under sections 147 (Trespass and refusal to desist from trespass), 145 B (Commits nuisance), and 166 (Defacing public notices) of Railway Act.

DMK sources said Selvaraj staged the act to to grab attention of party leaders, as he was removed from the post of Coimbatore district (South) coordinator following the DMK's defeat in 2021 Assembly election in Coimbatore district.

In Tirunelveli, DMK cadres erased Hindi letters from the name board of Palayankottai railway station and wrote "Tamil Vaazhga". They also raised slogans praising Tamil.

Jumbo tramples tribal couple to death in Kannur

KANNUR (KERALA): A tribal couple was trampled to death by a wild elephant at Aralam rehabilitation land in Kannur on Sunday, sparking protests by residents. Velli, 80, and his wife Leela, 72, were attacked and killed while collecting cashew nuts on their land just 600m from the Rapid Response Team office. With this, 13 people have lost their lives in wild jumbo attacks in the state so far this year. Forest Minister A K Saseendran sought a report from Kannur District Collector Arun K Vijayan on the incident, even as UDF and BJP gave separate calls for a hartal in Aralam panchayat on Monday. Saseendran will visit the farm on Monday afternoon and chair an all-party meeting at Aralam grama panchayat later in the day. The Emergency Disaster Management Committee chaired by Arun has decided to provide a compensation of ₹20 lakh to the duo's family. The forest department has allocated ₹10 lakh per victim, with ₹5 lakh each set to be released in the initial phase. ENS

CONG COUNTERS LATEST THAROOR CONTROVERSY BY PLAYING IT DOWN

KS SREEJITH @T'Puram

AS **Shashi Tharoor** continues to march to the beat of his own drum with repeated controversial statements, there is a growing feeling within both the Congress and the UDF that enough is enough. However, the state Congress leadership has conspicuously decided not to succumb to any provocation on the part of Tharoor which might ultimately give a political edge to the four-time Thiruvananthapuram MP.

"If Tharoor wants to leave the Congress, let him do so," a senior UDF leader said on condition of anonymity. "He has become ambitious and opportunistic. I think if he leaves the party it will be good for both the Congress and the UDF. There was a time when we thought that he could become a consensus candidate for chief minister if the power struggle between some leaders in the party continued unabated. At this point, we cannot even think about it," he told *TNIE*.

Speaking on a podcast of *The Indian Express*, Tharoor said the Congress cannot hope to win the 2026 Assembly election with its committed vote bank, and would need outside support. "In Thiruvananthapuram, my appeal was above party politics and I got the support from people who did not like Congress. That is what we want in 2026. If Congress gets its committed voters' votes only in 2026, we will sit in the opposition," he said. Tharoor said some Congress leaders share his views. "Even some of the UDF partners have told me so. People like the way I talk and behave. Opinion polls conducted by independent agencies show that he is ahead of other leaders. If the party wants to use it I will be there. If not, I will look for other options. I have time to utilise other options," he added. This seems to be a reiteration of a statement Tharoor made two years ago in an interview to *TNIE*, as part of its Express Dialogues series. "I am seriously examining all the options that are available to me in the present situation... if the party were to give me the ticket to contest the [Thiruvananthapuram] seat again [in the 2024 general election], that would be one option. And there are other options, and I will have to weigh all the other options in my mind," he had said.

This is the second time in two weeks that Tharoor has punched the Congress below the belt. In an opinion piece published in TNIE on February 14, he praised the economic growth achieved by Kerala under the CPM-led LDF government. Though state Congress leaders came down heavily on Tharoor, the AICC leadership intervened. Rahul Gandhi even invited Tharoor for a discussion. However, Tharoor refused to climb down from his stance.

However, the state Congress leadership seems to have smelt a rat this time around, and has decided not to issue any statement that could pave the way for the CWC leader to act more aggressively. "We have decided not to respond to Tharoor's statements," CWC member Ramesh Chennithala told *TNIE*. "Local-body elections are round the corner. We are here to work for the unity of the party. We have to win the election," he said.

The Muslim League, the second largest partner in the UDF, is not happy with the developments. "We'd like to see these controversies and rebellions coming to end very soon. We have already conveyed this to them," a senior League leader said.

EDITORIAL

How can society help all those people the markets have left behind?

Abhijit Banerjee

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

TESLA'S ENTRY MUST NOT DISTRACT FOCUS FROM DOMESTIC EV INDUSTRY

THE electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem in the country faces many challenges, and Elon Musk's Tesla investment (or not) in India is the least of the worries. Yes, Tesla is a big EV player, and its presence in the domestic market can have a positive rub-off effect. However, excessive focus on its entry into India is taking the debate away from many other significant matters. The EV passenger vehicles market share in India is 2.4 percent, and it needs not just subsidy but a substantial push in EV infrastructure to even think of achieving a market share of around 9 percent, similar to the current EV market share in the United States. The domestic e-vehicle market received the necessary support initially, and rightly so, from the government through subsidies. Some of the subsidies are still there, albeit in a water-down version. Fiscal support from the government cannot run forever, and the market has to develop on its own—after the government's early heavy lifting.

The more significant challenge for the industry is the infrastructure supporting the adoption and proliferation of EVs nationwide. It should not just be an urban phenomenon. The charging infrastructure has to spread fast enough. The industry has to find the best possible solution—charging stations, battery swapping, or a combination of both. The demand for batteries has already increased sharply, though the ample supply of batteries remains a concern. India has traditionally been an importer of energy sources to drive its auto industry, so can it rely on mass imports of batteries in the future? It has to secure a domestic supply chain of batteries. The government's Production Linked Incentive scheme for battery manufacturers has provided the necessary support. However, the country needs to manufacture these cells cost-effectively to ensure it does not rely on China, like in so many other sectors, for the supply of batteries.

Tesla is merely a marquee brand whose success in India itself is a big question mark, given the price points of its cars. The Indian car market is unique, as European and US car makers have constantly failed to make much headway in India. While American brands can find their way into the Indian market, the country should focus on creating a robust demand for its EVs.

ENCASH GOOD VIBES AT KERALA INVESTOR SHOW

THE just-concluded Invest Kerala, a grandiose global summit in Kochi showcasing the state's investment destination potential, can be deemed a success because it sent out positive signals about the government's intent to create a business climate and push for rapid development. Speakers participating in the discussions extolled the virtues of Kerala, the human capital it takes pride in, and its potential to lead India's economic growth. The event garnered expressions of interest (EoIs) for investments worth ₹1.53 lakh crore, which should be considered a bonus. As many as 374 companies submitted EoIs, the Adani Group leading the chart with an assurance of ₹30,000 crore investments over five years. Twenty-four IT companies favoured expanding operations at an investment of ₹8,500 crore, generating 60,000 more jobs.

The Kerala government said it will create a fast-track mechanism, including a dashboard-based online system, to realise these investments. A key takeaway is that the summit made progress in changing the long-standing perception of Kerala being a business-unfriendly state with a highly militant labour force and a hostile political climate. Bipartisan political support is the other, as the ruling and the opposition parties came together on a common platform to jointly pitch for the state, with the BJP-ruled Centre extending its wholehearted support. The message was that development is above politics, and economic growth is non-negotiable.

With the summit done, the real work begins now. It does not matter who was at the summit and who said what unless the government shows commitment to cashing in on the goodwill generated and ensures customary lethargy or political compulsions do not hamper its plans. The ongoing controversy over the Palakkad brewery project exemplifies how industrial plans can still get caught in Kerala's characteristic political crossfire. Most companies that submitted EoIs at the summit already have a presence in the state. Kerala must find a way to break out of its limitations and make itself attractive to global giants, especially those in the tech world. Beyond the grandeur of the summit, the challenge is to convince investors to see value in brand Kerala and provide a conducive atmosphere if they do decide to come in. The summit may have helped spread the good word, but the state still has its task cut out.

QUICK TAKE

SAY BYE-BYES AT HOME, NOT PLATFORMS

WORLDWIDE, like in airports, only bonafide passengers enter platforms at rail stations. Separate arrivals and departures regulate visitors who wait, eat or meet on concourses. Following the New Delhi station stampede, the railways ordered permanent holding or waiting areas. Indian stations already have such spaces at entrances. The point is to stop overcrowding on platforms and pathways by barring entry to see-off and receiving crowds and excess unreserved passengers. Together, they outnumber ticketed passengers. Courts have already questioned the sale of tickets beyond the capacity of unreserved coaches. Ending platform ticket sales and restricting them to emergencies is equally essential. The railways must prioritise people's safety over revenue.

When institutions themselves become partisan, electoral outcomes are far removed from the will of the people. It is time for a structural change in the entire electoral process

ROOT FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS, VALUE DEMOCRACY

KAPIL SIBAL

Senior lawyer and member of Rajya Sabha

SOURAV ROY

OUR electoral processes are in a shambles. I am not talking about the functioning of the EVMs. I am talking about how elections are being conducted under the ostensible impartial gaze of the Election Commission.

The major flaw in the laws relating to elections is that though candidates are subject to a maximum ceiling of election expenses, no such ceiling applies to the costs of political parties. The result is that apart from candidates spending money beyond the maximum prescribed, which they do not naturally declare to the Election Commission, the political parties, especially those flush with funds, use their money power so that the electoral process becomes an uneven playing field. Those of us who, beyond our borders, tell the world that our democracy is thriving just because an election has taken place are indeed aware of how electoral victories are manipulated through sheer money power.

It would not be inaccurate to say that the industry, with high stakes in its enterprises and which seeks favours from the government, funds political parties in power through means, fair or foul. The electoral bond scheme, struck down by the Supreme Court, had enriched a political party in power at the Centre based on enormous donations from commercial players, perhaps due to a quid pro quo, emanating from favours doled out by the government. There are enough facts to suggest that it is indeed so.

The electoral bond scheme allowed for the funding of political parties through banking channels. Yet the display of expenditure by political parties during any election is obscene. There is no mechanism in the law to deal with this. As a result, the political party having access to maximum funding gets an undue advantage in the electoral process and its outcome.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. On the ground, the manipulation of the electoral process is frightening. There are allegations that those electors and class of electors perceived to be against the political party in power are lured through unsavoury transactions, ensuring that either they do not venture to vote or are persuaded to vote by offering allurements difficult to resist. I am also told that in some instances, black indelible ink used at the polling station is administered and readily accepted by the electors for a price. This ensures that such a person, perceived as voting for the opposition, will not come to vote. No mechanism is available to prevent this unacceptable interference in the election process.

We are aware that thousands of voters' names are added to the electoral rolls within six months of the election. These numbers are occasionally larger than those added to the electoral rolls in the last five years. It casts serious doubt on the veracity of these additions and calls for a serious investigation, which the Election Commission, being aware of the facts, is loath to do. That is not all. We have instances in the New Delhi assembly constituency, where elections were recently held, where names were added in establishments; those many additional people could not possibly have resided there, given the size of the accommodation. We are also aware that a political party member, who allegedly followed the rules and, through an application, ensured the deletion of eighteen thousand electors in that constituency. This is perhaps not an isolated example. Massive deletions of names from the electoral roll occur, especially concerning members of a particular religious community, which skews electoral outcomes. Again, no effective mechanism is available in law to stop such mass deletions.

Yet another more serious issue mocks the concept of free and fair elections, which the Election Commission is duty-bound to ensure. The Police administration is often used in certain specific constituencies to either pick up people overnight or ensure that certain electors or class of electors do not exercise their franchise. This allows for a drop in the percentage of votes polled in those constituencies. We saw that happening in Rampur some time ago, and we have seen that happening in almost every election held recently.

When the police machinery, which should ensure a level playing field, itself creates an uneven playing field and allows those in power to offer allurements both in cash and kind, then the rationale of a free and fair election becomes a farce. I am given to understand that in the bye-election of Milkipur in Uttar Pradesh, the 500 complaints to the Election Commission, alleging fake voting, rigging and intimidation, received no response.

This is apart from the blatantly biased functioning of the Election Commission in the recent past. In certain states, elections are staggered; in others, they are held simultaneously for no rational reason. The public perception is that such decisions tend to help the political party in power.

The discriminatory attitude of the Election Commission was further evident in the recent past, where the ruling party members were allowed to make statements in gross violation of the model code of conduct, with the Commission acting as a mute spectator. When the institutions themselves become partisan, the electoral outcomes are far removed from the will of the people.

The other aspect relates to how election disputes are allowed to take years to resolve because court processes are laggard. We are all aware that most of the election petitions linger for years, and some become infructuous or are decided long after the term of the assembly.

It is time for a structural change in the entire electoral process. Civil servants should never man the Election Commission in the light of our recent experiences. The process of selection should be revamped. The method of appointment of Election Commissioners should not be in the hands of the ruling party but through an institutional framework which will ensure that the cherished dream of our forefathers for a free and fair poll being a basic structure of the Constitution is realised. At the moment, their dream is being shattered.

(Views are personal)
(Tweets @KapilSibal)

WHEN THE MEEK TURN, THERE WILL BE HAVOC

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

DESPITE being discouraged by ever so many people, I went to the Mahakumbh last week. The experience was well-curated by the friend who invited me to accompany her. We did not stay in the tent city but a private hotel in town. So we did not face a traffic jam while getting there. Through the hotel owner, my friend pre-arranged a driver and boatman. Coordinating the two, we went straight for our dip after reaching our hotel.

Instead of going to the busy side of the Ganga, our driver took us to the Yamuna. Our boatman, Bablu, met us on the road and took us to a small, sandy bank of the Yamuna, where his rowboat was moored. Rowboat, not a motorboat. So, it was hard work for Bablu and his helper, and a blissful lack of ugly engine noise for us.

We approached the Sangam by the Yamuna, and it was exhilarating to see how full and clean she was, unlike her miserable plight in Delhi. Unsurprisingly, this queenly river was considered holy by the ancients.

I asked Bablu if he was from Uttar Pradesh, and he drew himself up proudly and said he was a Nishada, "Ramji *ke dost*", the friend of Sri Rama. He meant he was a descendant of Guha, chief of the Nishadas, who rowed Rama, Sita and Lakshmana across the river into exile. He was living history. And he was so kind, carrying my bag, helping me on and off the boat, and into and out of the Sangam. The water was clean and flowed fairly fast, and I suffered no after-effects.

On the flight home, I was surprised to see my next-door neighbours, a retired Air Force officer and his very smart wife. They told me why they went to Prayagraj: "The opposition spoke so badly about it that we decided to go. Who are they to tell us what to do?" The lesson seemed evident: don't push peaceful, live-and-let-live Hindus to the wall like this. The Tamil saying goes, "*Sadhu mirandaal kaadu kollaathu*". 'When the meek turn, there will be havoc', meaning there will be consequences if a normally soft-natured person is provoked beyond endurance.

But how sweet were these people that, instead of saying or doing something bad, went and offered themselves to the Kumbh in solidarity with other pilgrims? It was a deep cultural response in the spirit of *tapasya* that they did *parishram*, and threw themselves like *ahuti* into the *havankund*. I respect that response.

The religion teaches believers not to flinch from the truth, which is what opened the door to reforms. But you have to know where critiques are coming from. I would like to go back to the 19th-century Bengali epic *Meghnad Badh Kavya* in nine *cantos*, by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. My Bengali friends tell me it's a brilliant read. In it, Dutt valorises Ravana's son Indrajit or Meghnad, negatively portraying Rama and Lakshmana. We cannot really blame him for it because our religion was not doing well in the 19th century.

PTI

> Kumbh critiques need to be understood as mainly political, whereas it is cultural and belongs to the people. My biggest take-home from the Kumbh was the deep unity underlying our diversity, the palpable sense of belonging

Dutt was a learned, sensitive person. However, instead of fighting for reforms as so many brave Hindus did from within, he took the quickest shortcut to modernity available in his day, the English church. In his new persona, he spurned Rama as a foundational figure of the faith, although it was not God's fault but man's that Hindu society mistreated its people. Broke in England, he was repeatedly bailed out by his benevolent reformer friend, Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar.

Dutt wrote reams in English but literary magazines in England refused to publish him. Finally, it was by writing about *Ramayana* in his mother tongue, Bengali, that he became famous. Epic grace touched him, although he was a critic, demonstrating the belief of devotees that just thinking about Rama works its own miracles.

As to which, a reader wrote about last week's discussion on Eklavya, "From childhood, many of us have been brought up demonising Drona and Arjuna in the case of Eklavya, as in the story *The Purpose* by T P Kailasam."

From what I've read about him, T P Kailasam was wayward and irresponsible, abandoning his wife and daughters. Small wonder that he did not relate to epic values.

However, his daughter Kamala Subramaniam made magnificent reparation to society with her translations of the two epics and the *Bhagavatam*.

Even though Kailasam is lauded for his contribution to modern Kannada literature, he cannot hold a candle to Valmiki and Vyasa, wouldn't you say? He could only poke holes in their work.

Moreover, a reader told me that not only had Eklavya sneaked upon Drona, but also Drona noticed that Eklavya had sealed the dog's mouth with a *divya astra*, learnt by stealth. It was a serious misuse of a big weapon for a small thing. Drona realised Eklavya had acquired power without responsibility and was a danger to society if let loose. So, his ability had to be reduced.

What Vyasa's story should concern us the most is what Vyasa himself said about Eklavya—that he joined Duryodhana in the battle of Kurukshetra, espoused *adharma*, and died there. It was in character.

So, Kumbh critiques must be understood as mainly political, whereas it is cultural and belongs to the people. All our so-called identities dissolved there. My biggest take-home from the Kumbh was the deep unity underlying our diversity and the palpable sense of belonging. Strangers across India smiled at each other like at a big family wedding. It is a unique experience that I am grateful for.

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

US insensitivity

Ref: *Humiliating Indians trips Trump's mission* (Feb 23). The recent deportation of Indian migrants from the US has left an indelible stain on our nation's dignity. The fact that the US government saw fit to film and publicise this is a blatant display of insensitivity and arrogance. I urge the Indian government to take a strong stance on this issue and ensure our citizens are not subjected to such humiliation in the future.
Lawrence Vadukut, Thrissur

Hypocritical acts

US President Donald Trump's actions against India are aimed at minimising its relevance in international diplomacy. While illegal Indian immigrants were deported chained and shackled, Chinese and Pakistani deportees were not. One wonders why our government failed to send a commercial aircraft to bring back the deportees as successfully done by Sushma Swaraj in 2018.
D Sethuraman, Chennai

Misinterpreted symbol

Ref: *The evolution of a Harappan icon* (Feb 23). The *lingam* is not a phallic symbol for sure, which is a gross misinterpretation by western Indologists. The *lingam* signifies the trinity of the Hindu pantheon: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It is an auspicious part of the religion that should not be misrepresented in such a way.
G Nataraja Perumal, Elathur

Flyers' comfort

Ref: *Shivraj slams Air India over broken seat* (Feb 23). Agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's response to Air India's 'broken' and 'sunken' seat is justified. Air India authorities must take care of maintaining the seats and other basic amenities for the comfort of fliers.
H P Murali, Bengaluru

Exploiting interns

Ref: *'60 med colleges not paying stipends to interns'* (Feb 23). To prevent such exploitation, the National Medical Commission must take a stronger stance. Regular audits and enforcement of rules are crucial. Raising awareness on this issue can pressure authorities to act.
Nandhana Krishna, Kollam

Enquiry required

Ref: *Oppn up in arms as minister headed non-existent Punjab dept for 2 yrs* (Feb 23). This is extremely shameful for a mature democracy like India. This proves ministerial berths and functions have only a notional significance without any credibility. A full-fledged enquiry into this sordid episode is essential.
Rajarao Kumar, Bengaluru

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Shivraj Singh Chouhan @ChouhanShivraj
Makhana of Bihar is a superfood. To increase Makhana production and quality and solve the problems of farmers, a Makhana Board is being formed in Bihar.

Akhilesh Yadav @yadavakhilesh
Entry of a bull in the queue of devotees at Varanasi's Kashi Vishwanath Temple is a lapse in security measures which could have had fatal consequences.

Chandra Shekhar Aazad @BhimArmyChief
The attack on Dalit brides, their family members in UP's Mathura district is a disgusting example of planned caste terror and social oppression.

Mazagon Dockyard in partnership with German firm will build submarines under 'Make-in-India' programme

Panel on cost soon to firm up sub project

MAYANK SINGH AND JAYANTH JACOB @New Delhi

FORMATION of a cost negotiation committee is unde way to speed up the Indian Navy's Project 75 (India) project under which submarines will be built in alignment with the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

The CNC to be firmed up soon will include officials from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Navy and Defence Finance in addition to representatives of Mazagon Dockyard Limited (MDL) that will lead the project under strategic partnership (SP) with Germany's TKMS (ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems), said sources.

"Once the project is firmed up, MDL and Germany must adhere to the objectives of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. TKMS will need to meet 100% of the commercial and technical requirements, including transfer of technology and Indian content," an MoD source said. "This area will be closely scrutinised to ensure that actual design knowledge is transferred to India after the delivery of the first submarine, allowing India to freely use this technology as needed," the source added.

"A contract will be signed between the MoD and MDL. Further, there will be a contract between MDL and TKMS. Work share and responsibilities will be finalised under the contracts," another source said.

"Firstly the design will be confirmed and then it will be work converted into a functional system. The transfer of technology from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) should be such that the next class of submarines should be totally Indian, from scratch to operational system," the source said.

"Historically Germans are not known for sharing such extensive knowledge in defence programmes, so the successful implementation of the SP model is will be seen as significant," the source added.

Another concern voiced by the sources emanates from the past experience of the cost and time overrun in construction of the Scorpene Class submarines. In the case of Scorpene (P75), the Naval Group of France was involved with the MDL.

The delay in P75 was substantial as the contract for six Scorpene submarines (Kalvari-class) worth ₹18,706 crore was signed in 2005. While the cost escalated to about ₹23,000 crore, the first of the Scorpene submarines built at MDL was inducted in 2017 instead of 2012. While the envisioned plan for the project inked in 2005 was to induct all six by 2017, the last one, INS Vagsheer, was inducted in January this year.

Earlier in 1994, India manufactured two German submarines but the gap of 11 years led to loss of this specialised skill. Things are already delayed for the Expression of Interest for six advanced AIP integrated submarines was issued in 2019. From the date of the contract signed it would take 7-8 years for the first submarine to get inducted.

The Project 75 Scorpene class, with the French Naval Group, faced huge time and cost overrun. The Project 75I is already delayed and if the project gets confirmed this year the first submarine of its class will be inducted by 2032.

As reported earlier, the ₹45,000 crore project aims at constructing six advanced submarines under Project 75I, which aims to boost to 'Make in India' programme.

Cost and time overrun in construction

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Army Chief goes on France visit to bolster ties

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

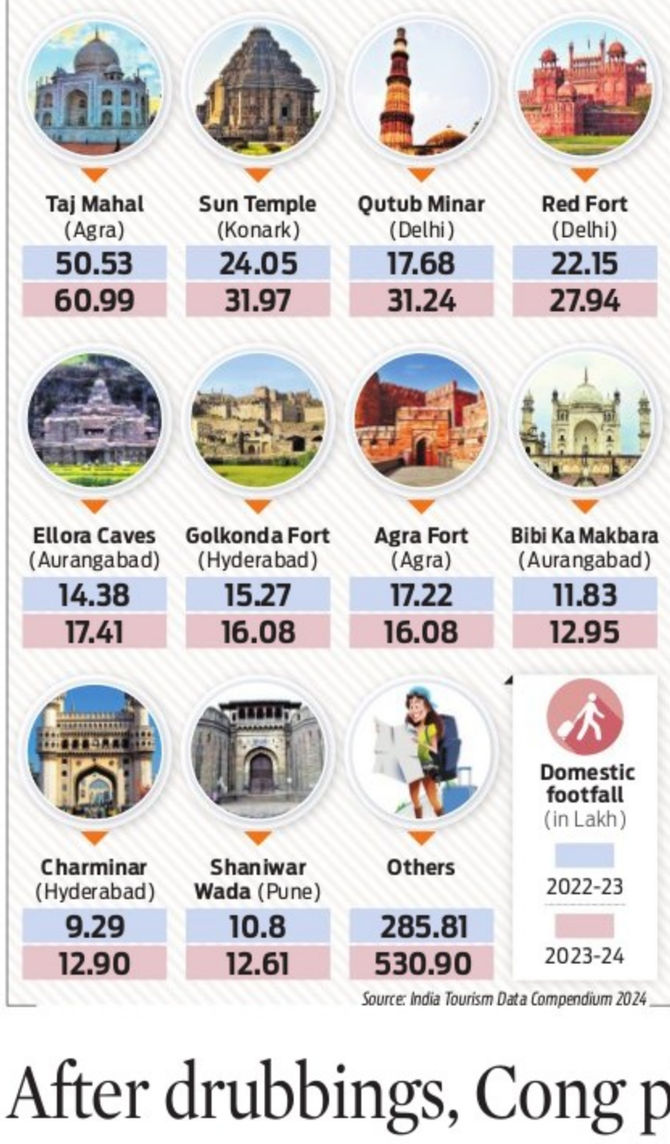
CHIEF of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday left for France for a four-day visit to boost bilateral military cooperation. "The visit aims to strengthen military collaboration between India and France, exploring new avenues of cooperation and enhancing strategic partnerships between the two nations' armed forces," the Indian Army said.

The visit from February 24 to 27 will involve Gen Dwivedi meeting senior military personnel of the French military and visiting the various institutions. He will be briefed at the Technical Section of the French Army and visit the Battle Lab Terre at Versailles, says a defence ministry spokesperson.

On February 25, the Army Chief will travel to Marseille, where he will visit the 3rd Division of the French Army and will be briefed on the mission and role of the 3rd Division, the bilateral exercise Shakti, India-France training cooperation, and the French Army modernisation programme (Scorpion).

WAH! TAJ MOST PREFERRED

Among 10 heritage sites, Mughal-era monument Taj Mahal attracted highest number of toursits, both domestic and foreign, in 2023 and 2024


Taj Mahal (Agra) 50.53 60.99
Sun Temple (Konark) 24.05 31.97
Qutub Minar (Delhi) 17.68 31.24
Red Fort (Delhi) 22.15 27.94
Ellora Caves (Aurangabad) 14.38 17.41
Golkonda Fort (Hyderabad) 15.27 16.08
Agra Fort (Agra) 17.22 16.08
Bibi Ka Makbara (Aurangabad) 11.83 12.95
Charminar (Hyderabad) 9.29 12.90
Shaniwar Wada (Pune) 10.8 12.61
Others 285.81 530.90
Domestic footfall (in Lakh)
2022-23
2023-24

Source: India Tourism Data Compendium 2024

Women's Day: Achievers to handle PM social media a/cs

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi, during his monthly radio broadcast 'Mann Ki Baat' on Sunday, informed the nation of an initiative dedicated to 'Nari Shakti' (women's power) on International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8 every year.

"On this special occasion, I am going to hand over my social media accounts like X and Instagram to some inspiring women of the country. Women who have achieved success in various fields; who have innovated and created a unique identity for themselves," he said.

The women handling his social media accounts would share their work and experiences with the nation. "The platform may be mine, but it will be about their experiences, their challenges, and their achievements. If you wish to be a part of this opportunity, join the special Forum created on the Namo App. This Women's Day, let us all celebrate, honour, and salute the indomitable power of women," Modi said.

In 2020, he had handed over his social media accounts to seven leading women in different fields on March 8. The PM further expressed, "Let us celebrate and respect the indomitable spirit of women."

Additionally, PM Modi also addressed the growing issue of obesity, urging caution and action to ensure that India remains a healthy nation. Referencing a study, he stated, "One in every eight people today faces the problem of obesity. Cases of obesity have doubled in recent years, but even more concerning is that the issue has increased fourfold among children."

The platform may be mine, but it will be about their experiences, their challenges, and their achievements. If you wish to be a part of this opportunity, join the special Forum created on the Namo App.

Narendra Modi, PM

Citing a WHO data, the PM noted that, in 2022, around 250 crore people worldwide were overweight. To combat obesity, PM Modi recommended reducing edible oil consumption by 10% in daily eating habits. "Decide that you will use 10% less oil every month. When buying oil for cooking, you will purchase 10% less. This will be an important step towards reducing obesity," he advised.

He also shared audio messages from celebrity sports figures such as Olympic medalist Neeraj Chopra and others, highlighting the importance of obesity control.

On India's freedom struggle, PM Modi reflected on the pivotal role of women. "In our culture, respect for daughters has always been paramount. The Matri-Shakti of the country also played a major role in our freedom struggle and the creation of the Constitution," he said.

Shifting focus to the advancements in AI, PM Modi discussed his recent visit abroad for an AI conference. "The people of India are second to none in adopting and experimenting with new technologies," he remarked.

INSIDER TRACK

Nadda waits to take Kumbh holy dip

Here is a Kumbh connection to BJP's Delhi election victory. While the entire BJP top deck made a beeline to Maha Kumbh not willing to miss the auspicious moments of 'shahi snans', party president J P Nadda waited for Delhi election results before taking a holy dip. In what can be called a 'thank you prayer' for the BJP's impressive comeback in the national capital after 27 long years, Nadda stopped at Kashi before reaching Prayagraj on Saturday. And his family, too, joined him for the holy dip at the Sangam.

Rajiv Gauba in the reckoning again

There is a strong buzz in the political circles that former cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba may soon get a place in the Narendra Modi's ministry. A reshuffle is expected around June or July. People in the know say if Gauba doesn't make it to the cabinet, then he is likely to get a governor role. Gauba served as cabinet secretary, with his term being extended four times—each for one-year periods. The close working relationship between Gauba and PM Modi has led to speculation about his possible inclusion in the cabinet. Given his impressive track record, Gauba could be assigned a significant portfolio, possibly similar to how S Jaishankar, also a former diplomat, was brought in for his expertise. Gauba's administrative experience, especially in national security, positions him as a strong candidate for roles such as IT minister or MoS Home. A graduate in Physics from Patna University, Gauba's career is marked by handling high-stakes situations, including the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and overseeing elections in Muzaffarpur and Gaya. His expertise in international economics even led to his appointment as Senior Adviser to the Executive Director at IMF in Washington. Known for his role in shaping the National Action Plan to combat Left-Wing Extremism and contributing to the peaceful revocation of Article 370, Gauba has a distinguished career.

The importance of Vivek Joshi

Vivek Joshi, a 1989-batch Haryana cadre IAS officer, appears to be a man of all seasons in the government, as he was assigned three important roles within a span of six months. Joshi from becoming Secretary to the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) to Chief Secretary of Haryana to ending up as the Election Commissioner within the same period indicates that he happened to be the most-sought-after officer. Barely three months before he was appointed as the Election Commissioner, on the request of the Haryana government, the Centre repatriated him to his home cadre and allowed him to be appointed as the Chief Secretary of the state on November 1, 2024. On February 19, he joined the Election Commission as one of the two Commissioners. He held the position of Secretary DoPT only for less than two and a half months before being shifted from Department of Financial Services under the Ministry of Finance on August 19, where he could remain in office only till October 31. Earlier, Joshi had nearly 2-year stints both as Secretary DFS and Registrar General and Census Commissioner, where he took charge in January 2019.

V-P hails Mammooty as Ambedkar

Southern film star Mammootty, accompanied by CPM MP John Britas, recently paid a visit to Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar. To the actor's surprise, Dhankhar spoke fondly about some of Mammootty's iconic roles, particularly his portrayal of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar in the 2000 film Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, directed by Jabbar Patel. The performance earned Mammootty his third National Award. The V-C specifically mentioned certain frames from the movie, particularly those shot in Parliament, where the actor's portrayal of Ambedkar left a lasting impact. Dhankhar spoke about how Mammootty brought depth to the character in those pivotal scenes, sparking a moment of shared appreciation between the two.

After drubbings, Cong plans central election dept

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

BATTERED by a string of electoral losses, the Congress plans to set up a central election management department to revive the party's wilting political fortunes. This initiative is one of the key goals outlined in the Udaipur Declaration, adopted by the Congress Working Committee (CWC) during a three-day Nav Sankalp Shivir in May 2022. The new election management cell aims to implement much-needed reforms in the party's electoral strategies.

According to party sources, the election management department will be responsible for preparing the party well in advance for every election, ensuring effective management and achieving the desired outcomes. Although the party is yet to announce the head of the department, discussions around potential young leaders for the role are ongoing.

Sources said the party has taken a serious view on setting up an election management department, in the recent meeting of the party brass with newly appointed general secretaries and states in charge. The meeting was chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi.

While many of the Udaipur resolutions have been on the back burner for three years, the party's disappointing performances in the Haryana and Maharashtra assembly elections have spurred the leadership to focus on improving election management and advancing the proposal sooner than expected, said a source.

Stressing on the importance of long-term planning for elections, a leader said, "There's an old saying, 'In times of peace, prepare for war'. The Congress should be following that. Last-minute election management would not help the party fight against a fiercely combative and resource-rich BJP. I won't say war rooms and surveys are not effective. The party will have to start planning strategies the day after it loses an election."

Sources added that the party's renewed focus on strengthening District Congress Committees will help co-ordinate and consolidate its efforts on election management.

According to AICC leader Jairam Ramesh, the emphasis of the strategy meeting was more on strengthening the party at the district level. "There was a detailed discussion about strengthening around 800 district Congress committees across the country," he said.

Top brass meeting

The party has taken a serious view on setting up a poll management department, in the recent meeting of the party brass with newly appointed general secretaries and states in charge. The meeting was chaired by Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by LoP Rahul Gandhi.

AICC session in Ahmedabad on April 8 and 9

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

THE Congress will hold its All India Congress Committee (AICC) session in Ahmedabad on April 8 and 9 to discuss its road map and the challenges posed by the BJP's 'anti-people' policies and its alleged attack on the Constitution.

Congress general secretary, in-charge organization, K C Venugopal said the session will serve not only as a platform for deliberations but also as a reaffirmation of the party's collective resolve to address the concerns of people and present a alternative vision for the nation. The session will commence with an extended Congress Working Committee meeting, followed by AICC Delegates' meeting on April 9, he said.

Congress's decision to choose Gujarat assumes significance as the state is scheduled for elections in 2027.

NHAI lays out roadmap to keep check on quality of construction

PARVEZ SULTAN @New Delhi

IN response to growing criticism over the poor quality of certain stretches of national highways, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced a new multilevel quality control mechanism aimed at enhancing the construction standards of roads. The Authority has proposed the establishment of 'Independent Regional Quality Offices' in all five zones, replacing the previous practice of a 'One-time source approval' from the headquarters.

These new offices will function under the NHAI's Standards, Research, Development & Quality division. Each office will be headed by a regional quality officer (RQC), who will be responsible for coordinating and managing quality control matters in their respective regions. The RQCs will conduct random testing of materials such as cement, steel, emulsion and products like bearings, expansion joints and components at project sites under their jurisdiction twice a year through third-party laboratories.

To further streamline the process, NHAI has released a detailed standard operating procedure for factory inspections where supplies are sourced, including the roles and responsibilities of the RQCs. According to the officials, the pace of highway development has significantly accelerated over the past decade and hence, the focus has now shifted to ensuring the maintenance and quality of construction.

Multiple meetings within the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) have been held recently to address concerns over construction quality, said officials. Recently, the ministry faced criticism on social media for the poor quality of highways like the Delhi-Jaipur stretch and the Amritsar-Jamnagar Economic Corridor. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has also expressed his concerns regarding the state of road quality and construction.

Under the new SoP, in addition to the RQOs, SRD&Q may nominate officials from the headquarters or engage expert agencies to collect samples for testing. In cases where samples fail, appropriate action will be taken, the officials said.

In December, NHAI also introduced a comprehensive performance rating system for concessionaires involved in highway construction and maintenance projects, aimed at enhancing accountability and evaluating construction quality. The rating system will be updated every six months and made publicly available on the NHAI website and through its social media channels.

'PROTECTION OFFICERS'

In view of rising number of domestic violence cases in the state, the Bihar government is set to appoint 140 full-time 'protection officers' to support women affected by domestic violence more effectively, a senior officer of the social welfare department told a news agency.

3.7 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS HIMACHAL'S MANDI

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	22	22	Mumbai	36	26
Bhopal	28	15	Panaji	37	24
Jaipur	28	17	Patna	28	17
Amritsar	24	13	Lucknow	28	14
Chennai	30	26	Port Blair	28	27
Kolkata	28	21	Imphal	25	11
Srinagar	12	02	Chandigarh	26	14

Indian deportees from Panama reach capital

4th flight carrying 12 illegal immigrants from US lands; 4 from Punjab

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

A group of Indians, who were deported from the US to Panama, were repatriated on Sunday after a flight carrying 12 Indian nationals landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. Among them, four hailed from Punjab, and were then put on a connecting flight to Amritsar.

This is the first batch of Indians who were repatriated after being deported to Panama from the US. With this, four flights carrying illegal Indian immigrants to the US have arrived in the country.

The US had deported around 299 illegal immigrants to Panama. Sources said the deportees landed in Delhi on a Turkish Airlines flight via Istanbul.

Four of the deportees were from Punjab and were put on a connecting flight to Amritsar from Delhi and they have landed in their native state.

Among them. Jatinder Singh (34) from Patiala paid ₹52 lakh to go to the US. He travelled from Delhi to Guana, through Brazil, Columbia, Guatemala and Mexico, before illegally arriving in the US.

Another, Maninder Dutt (23) of Chandpur in Jalandhar, paid ₹42 lakh to fraudulent travel agents who took him from Delhi to Spain, then El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico.

Jugraj Singh (33) of Chaudhpur village in Gurdaspur paid up ₹38 lakh to travel the "donkey route" – Delhi, Mumbai, Amsterdam, Brazil, Columbia and into the US.

Meanwhile, Harpreet Singh (30) of Cheema village in Gurdaspur also dished out ₹38 lakh to travel the same route.

Among the other deportees, three are reportedly from Haryana and another three from Uttar Pradesh.

The exact number of Indian immigrants among the 299 deportees to Panama, howevr, remains unclear.

On Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs had stated it has seen reports about deportation flights to Panama and New Delhi and is verifying the details as to whether the individuals are Indian nationals or not.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal during his weekly briefing had said, "Once the verifications are complete, arrangements will be made for return of Indian nationals."

The first group of Indians deported by the US earlier arrived in Panama after President Jose Raul Mulino agreed his country would become a bridge country for deportees.

US-BASED RING

Punjab police bust extortion racket, 2 held

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

PUNJAB Police has busted a major extortion racket operated by US-based gangster Gurdev Jassal with the arrest of two persons linked with the syndicate, including an assistant sub-inspector.

The accused officer, ASI Surjit Singh posted in Batala, has been dismissed from service after recovery of ₹83 lakh alleged extortion money, illegal firearms, and luxury vehicles from possession of the accused.

Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav on Sunday said the other accused has been identified as Ankus Maini, resident of Kalanaur in Gurdaspur.

Preliminary investigation revealed that ASI Surjit Singh and Ankus Maini were involved in the collection and distribution of extortion funds, the senior officer, adding that, the gang used foreign numbers for threat calls and coordinated payments, ensuring that the extortion funds were routed through multiple intermediaries.

On February 4, associates of Jassal opened fire at a petrol pump of a Kalanaur businessman with an intent to intimidate him and extort money. After continuous threats, the businessman paid ₹50 lakhs.

Border tourism: J&K's Gurez Valley opens its door to foreign visitors

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

WITH the end of cross-border firing and sharp drop in militancy in the Valley, authorities have opened the Gurez Valley, situated close to Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir (once a 'no-go area' for civilians), for foreign tourists to promote the border tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Gurez MLA Nazir Ahmed Khan told this newspaper that Gurez has been thrown open for the foreign tourists. "Now, foreign tourists don't need army permission for visiting the place. They can get permission from the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora," he said, adding that there were no further caps on foreign tourist visiting the picturesque Valley.

Gurez, which was thrown open to domestic visitors in 2007, was off-limits to foreign tourists due to its proximity to the LoC. After remaining in the shadow of guns and violence for decades, the scenic Gurez Valley in Bandipora district, is gradually transforming into a tourism destination.

"It has transitioned from a place witnessing heavy cross border firing and shelling to being a key attraction for tourists," said the Gurez MLA.

Khan said opening Gurez for foreign tourists is significant as it would boost tourism, bringing in investments.

With the opening of border areas, earlier strictly out of civilian limits, locals have turned their houses into homestays for tourist accommodation, likely to boost commercial activities in the area. "We are living without threat to our lives. And this visible change on the ground has also benefited us as Gurez has been opened for foreign tourists," local resident Zahoor Ahmed said.

Besides, being close to LoC, Gurez has several scenic locales including the Vishen, Kishen and Gad lakes. Gurez is also known for adventure tourism, rafting, and trekking

Assam approves ₹1.22 lakh crore investment plans

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

AHEAD of the two-day Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment and Infrastructure Summit, the Assam cabinet on Sunday approved investment proposals worth ₹1.22 lakh crore.

"The Cabinet approved investment proposals worth ₹1.22 lakh crore. It will go up further," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said at a press conference.

MoUs involving ₹15,000 crore will be signed at the district level and all these proposals will be swiftly implemented on ground, he said.

Sarma said except for the piggery sector, MoUs would be signed in various other sectors including handloom textile, power, industries, and mines and minerals. He added that all MoUs would be scrutinised before approval by the council of ministers. The cabinet rejected MoUs worth ₹45,000 crore after they were found to be "casual" and "flimsy". "We are not taking up the flimsy kinds of proposals as we don't want to create unnecessary euphoria among people," Sarma said.

The February 25-26 summit in Guwahati will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

HOLY DIP

Sankara Vijayendra Shankaracharya Swamigal of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam visited Prayagraj for the Holy Snan at Triveni Sangamam on Sunday. He performed Ganga pooja and prayed for the global wellness and peace before undertaking the holy dip along with Sri Krishnanada Teertha Swamigal from Sakatapuram Mutt | EXPRESS

Kin of 4 trapped J'khand workers seek safe return

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

FAMILY members of the workers trapped in the under-construction tunnel in Telangana have appealed the government for their safe return. As many as eight workers are feared trapped after a part of the under-construction Srisailam Left Bank Canal tunnel's roof collapsed 14-km from Domalapenta in Nagarkurnool district around 8.30 am on Saturday.

Four of them belong to Jharkhand's Gumla, which include, Santosh Sahu, Anuj Sahu, Jagta Khes and Sandeep Sahu. The family members are worried. "My father had gone to work in Telangana two years back. We have been informed that he has been trapped inside the tunnel. We are worried for him, and hence, my mother has gone to the nearby temple to prey for his safe return," said Radhika Kumari, daughter of Santosh Sahu.

Prema Devi, the sister-in-law of Santosh Sahu, said that they received a phone call on Saturday evening that eight people have been trapped inside the tunnel, which has created a sense of uneasiness among the family members.

Durga Sahu, uncle of Satosh Sahu, also said that they have not slept since they received the phone call. "I would never allow them to go back again to work in such a high-risk condition," he said.

According to Santoshi Devi, wife of Sandeep Sahu, her husband had gone to Telangana last year to earn money as the financial condition of the family is not very good. After getting the information about the accident, they are very worried about the safety of her husband, she said.

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren has also urged his Telangana counterpart to provide all possible help to rescue the workers trapped in the tunnel.

Meanwhile, the Jharkhand government is coordinating with the Telangana administration, and is ready to provide all necessary help. The State Migrant Control Room is in touch with the Telangana government to ensure safe return of these workers.

Marks row: Himanta names students

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Guwahati

ASSAM Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday released the names of 209 Class 12 students who were allegedly promised higher marks in their CBSE examination by Mahbubul Hoque, the arrested Chancellor and owner of the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM).

"These are the names of students who were promised higher marks in their CBSE examination by the owner of USTM, Mahbubul Hoque," Sarma posted on X, sharing the names of the students.

He said Assam police were probing the matter after registering a case. "This is a serious matter and we seek cooperation from all concerned," he further said.

Hoque was arrested by cops from his Guwahati residence on Saturday morning and taken to Sribhumi district in southern Assam's Barak valley. Five teachers of the Central Public School, Patharkandi in Sribhumi were also arrested in connection with the case. The school is owned by Hoque.

All six accused persons were produced in a local court and it sent them to judicial custody.

Before Hoque's arrest, Assam education minister Ranoj Pegu said, "Students were reportedly assured assistance in the 30-mark MCQ section of their CBSE Class 12 exams at the Central Public School."

C'garh to harness ISRO technology innovations to boost key sectors

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to collaborate with the Chhattisgarh government to harness space-based applications for sustainable development. The partnership aims to leverage technology and innovation to drive progress in key sectors.

A team of ISRO experts will soon visit the state to bridge the gap between scientific advancements and on-ground implementation. The objective is to ensure that space-based solutions directly benefit citizens, policymakers and industries.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai recently held extensive discussions with ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan, exploring the use of space technology in agriculture, water resource management, environmental conservation, and disaster mitigation.

The discussions also focused on satellite-based surveys, geomapping and data-driven decision-making to enhance governance and boost economic growth. ISRO has assured full support to the state in these initiatives. "With ISRO's collaboration, Chhattisgarh will adopt a scientific approach to resolve key challenges. This initiative will equip farmers with precise data, optimise resource management, and accelerate the state's overall development", the CM said.

"As part of this initiative, a high-level ISRO team will conduct a comprehensive study using satellite imagery, Geographic Information Systems and advanced data analytics", a government official said.

The study will focus on soil health assessment for improved agricultural productivity, water resource mapping for sustainable river and groundwater management, and early warning systems for floods, droughts, and climate anomalies.

ISRO experts will submit a detailed report outlining a plan of action. Under ISRO's guidance, the state is poised for a transformative shift in governance and resource management. Key focus areas include precision farming, crop monitoring, and climate-adaptive strategies using satellite data.

The collaboration also aims to enhance capabilities in disaster management, smart city planning, and transportation through spatial analytics. Real-time satellite monitoring will be utilised to combat deforestation and prevent illegal land encroachments. "By integrating cutting-edge space technologies, we aim to strengthen governance and create a roadmap for the future. It will also empower research institutions, providing young scientists with opportunities to contribute to nation-building," CM said.

Rock Garden demolition sparks protests

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

ENVIRONMENTALISTS, heritage conservationists and residents staged protest on Sunday after the Chandigarh administration began demolishing parts of the iconic Rock Garden, created by Nek Chand. The demolition is part of a road-widening and parking project that also involves cutting down over 200 trees.

The demolition has sparked outrage among the city's residents, who are now planning to form a "Save Chandigarh Society" to oppose the move. The administration's plan is to create additional parking space near the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which requires the destruction of part of the Rock Garden, an area home to trees and peacocks.

The Rock Garden, known for its artistic use of recycled materials, holds significant emotional and cultural value for the residents. They are particularly upset about the cutting of trees around the structure. Speaking on the matter, senior lawyer Manmohan Lal Sarin said, "So sorry, Nek Chand Saini, your precious creation is being demolished to make way for polluting vehicles. We, the people of Chandigarh and the administration, have let you down, especially in your birth centenary year."

Robin Nakai, a friend of Nek Chand, shared his personal connection to the site, saying, "My wife and I would visit the Rock Garden during our college days and it's where our love story began. Watching this place being demolished is like watching our memories being erased."

Environmentalists have also voiced concerns about the impact of the demolition. Amrita Singh, an environmentalist, said, "In the name of development, they are cutting down trees, destroying the environment and harming everything Chandigarh stands for."

Samita Kaur, another environmentalist, pointed out that Chandigarh is a planned city, with tree-lined avenues designed by M.S. Randhawa, a botanist who worked with Le Corbusier. "Cutting down these trees only contributes to the rising air pollution in the city," she said.

Anuj Saini, the son of Nek Chand, also expressed his distress over the damage to his father's legacy. Local resident Paveela Bali added, "The administration seems unaware of the city's history and is ruining the beauty of Chandigarh."

Justice (Retd) S.S. Sodhi voiced his shock, stating, "Chandigarh and the Rock Garden are synonymous. It's heartbreaking to see this unique creation being destroyed."

Members of the Chandigarh Heritage Conservation Committee (CHCC) have also raised concerns, warning that this could set a dangerous precedent for the city's future preservation efforts.

Responding to the criticism, Chief Engineer of Chandigarh administration CB Ojha clarified that only one corner of the outer compounding wall of the Rock Garden is being moved slightly to straighten the road. "The main Rock Garden is not being touched at all. The demolition is being done following the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, after reviewing the case. As it was forest land, it was first de-notified and then only work started."

MUMBAI DIARY

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
Our correspondent in Maharashtra
suryawanshi.sudhir@gmail.com

With post, new party chief inherits liability

Nana Patole stepped down as the Maharashtra Congress president and, while handing over responsibilities to Harshvardhan Sapkal, he also transferred a bill of over ₹ 50 lakh unpaid dues to the new party chief. As per the conventions, the outgoing state president is responsible for settling all his tenure dues before officially passing on the position. However, this time, Mr Sapkal not only has significant challenge of reestablishing his party base but also clearing his predecessor's unpaid dues. This transfer of financial liability to the successor has caught many party members by surprise, with some labeling an improper moveand a wrong precedent.

Turmoil in Mahayuti over staff choices of ministers

In Mahayuti government, the ministers are facing difficulties in getting their preferred PAs and office staff. This issue extends beyond Shiv Sena and NCP ministers, BJP ministers are also affected. One BJP minister submitted two names for his PA and office boy to the general administration, which rejected it saying the ministers cannot appoint PAs or office according to their preferences. The annoyed minister then lodged a complaint with CM Devendra Fadnavis regarding the administration's decision. However, no action was taken.

Eknath Shinde aiming for the stars?

The disgruntled Deputy Chief Minister seems to be aspiring for something more substantial, as indicated by his frequent meetings with former Union Minister Sharad Pawar. Both leaders have been praising each other, leading to speculation that Shinde, who is the third-largest alliance partner in the NDA with seven Lok Sabha MPs, may have larger plans in mind. Interestingly, Shinde has repeatedly stated that no one should underestimate him. While this message might appear directed at the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT), it's more likely aimed at the BJP and its leadership in the national capital.

1 airman killed in shooting at a US Air Force base in New Mexico on Saturday

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	7	-5	SNY	Los Angeles	20	10	SNY
Colombo	32	25	SNY	Melbourne	19	15	LC
Dhaka	31	21	SNY	Moscow	-6	-9	LS
Dubai	26	20	LR	New York	-2	-9	SNY
Houston	17	6	LR	Singapore	30	25	LR
Istanbul	7	4	LR	Toronto	-7	-17	LS
London	7	2	SNY	Washington	11	7	LC

ECONOMIC TIES

Pak, B'desh begin direct trade for first time since 1971

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN and Bangladesh have resumed direct trade for the first time since the 1971 separation, with the first government-approved cargo departing from Port Qasim, according to a media report.

The agreement was finalised in early February when Bangladesh agreed to purchase 50,000 tonnes of Pakistani rice through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP).

"For the first time, a Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) vessel carrying government cargo will dock at a Bangladeshi port, marking a significant milestone in maritime trade relations," *The Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

East Pakistan separated from Pakistan in 1971 to form the independent state of Bangladesh.

The transportation of the goods marked the first instance of official trade relations being restored since 1971.

Under a deal finalised in early February, Bangladesh is set to import 50,000 tonnes of rice from Pakistan through the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP). The shipment will be completed in two phases, with the remaining 25,000 tonnes to be dispatched in early March.

The development is seen as a positive step in fostering economic cooperation and reopening trade channels that remained dormant for decades.

The latest trade deal is expected to boost economic ties between the two nations and facilitate direct shipping routes. *PTI*

CONSERVATIVES SET TO WIN GERMAN POLLS

Chancellor Olaf Scholz concedes defeat after exit polls showed his Social Democrats lagging right-wing parties

BERLIN

GERMAN opposition leader Friedrich Merz's Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) were on course for a lacklustre victory in a national election Sunday, while Alternative for Germany nearly doubled its support, the strongest showing for a far-right party since World War II, projections showed.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz conceded defeat for his centre-left Social Democrats party after what he called "a bitter election result". Projections for ARD and ZDF public television showed his party finishing in third place with its worst post-war result in a national parliamentary election.

It wasn't immediately clear how easy it will be for Merz to put together a coalition government.

The election took place seven months earlier than originally planned after Scholz's unpopular coalition collapsed in November, three years into a term that was increasingly marred by infighting.

There was widespread discontent and not much enthusiasm for any of the candidates.

The projections, based on exit polls and partial counting, put support for Merz's Union bloc at just under 29% and Alternative for Germany, or AfD, about 20%, roughly double its result from 2021. They put support for Scholz's Social Democrats at just over 16 per cent, far lower than in the last election. The environmentalist Greens, their remaining partners in the outgoing government, were on 12-13% . Out of three smaller parties, one 'the hard-left Left Party' appeared certain to win seats in parliament with up to 9%of the vote. Two other parties, the pro-business Free Democrats and the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, hovered around the threshold of the 5% support.

Economy, migration top voter concerns

ANALYSTS SAY CONCERNS OVER MIGRATION COULD GIVE THE FAR-RIGHT AN EDGE IN THE POLLS

59 million

people are eligible to elect the 630 members of the lower house of parliament, the Bundestag

Support for centre-right opposition leader Friedrich Merz's Union bloc in the most recent surveys. The far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, or AfD, has been running in second place with around 20% of the vote, above its previous best of 12.6% in a national poll

WHY GERMAN ELECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT

Germany is the most populous country in the 27-nation European Union and a leading member of NATO. It has been Ukraine's second-biggest weapons supplier, after the US

KEY ISSUES

☒ The contenders have made contrasting proposals to turn around the German economy, which has shrunk for the past two years and hasn't managed real growth in much longer. That's going to be a central job for the new government

☒ Migration moved to the forefront of the campaign in the past month following deadly attacks committed by immigrants

Musk backs AfD

Elon Musk, a tech billionaire and close ally of US President Donald Trump, has declared that "only the AfD can save Germany." He held a live chat on X with Weidel and appeared live by video link at an AfD campaign rally. At that rally, Weidel vowed to "make Germany great again" in an echo of Trump's "Make America Great Again" slogan. Nine days before the election, V-P J D Vance met with Weidel after a speech to the Munich Security Conference in which he lectured European leaders about democracy and free speech

Whether Merz will need one or two partners to form a coalition will depend on how many parties get into parliament.'I am aware of the responsibility,' Merz said. "I am also aware of the scale of the task ahead of us," he said. *AP*

US govt staff must brief Musk what they did last week

WASHINGTON

HUNDREDS of thousands of federal workers have been given little more than 48 hours to explain what they accomplished over the last week, sparking confusion across key agencies as billionaire Elon Musk expands his crusade to slash the size of federal government.

Elon Musk

Musk, who serves as President Donald Trump's cost-cutting chief, teased the extraordinary request on his social media network on Saturday.

"Consistent with President @realDonaldTrump's instructions, all federal employees will shortly receive an email requesting to understand what they got done last week," Musk posted on X, which he owns. "Failure to respond will be taken as a resignation." Shortly afterward, federal employees received a three-line email with this instruction: "Please reply to this email with approx. 5 bullets of what you accomplished last week and cc your manager." The deadline to reply is Monday at 11.59 pm, although the email did not include Musk's social media threat about those who fail to respond.

Patel tells FBI staff to ignore Musk

The latest unusual directive from Musk's team injects a new sense of chaos across beleaguered multiple agencies. FBI director Kash Patel asked the bureau's employees to ignore Musk's e-mails. "The FBI, through the Office of the Director, is in charge of all of our review processes, and will conduct reviews in accordance with FBI procedures. When and if further information is required, we will coordinate..." he told FBI staff. *Agencies*

Israeli tanks move into occupied West Bank for first time since 2002

JERUSALEM

ISRAELI tanks have moved into the occupied West Bank for the first time since 2002, shortly after the defense minister said troops will remain 'for the coming year' in parts of the Palestinian territory. Associated Press journalists saw a handful of tanks move Sunday into Jenin, long a bastion of armed struggle against Israel.

Israel is deepening its crackdown on the Palestinian territory and has said it is determined to stamp out militancy amid a rise in attacks.

Israel launched the broad offensive in the northern West Bank on January 21 ' two days after the current ceasefire in Gaza took hold ' and expanded it to nearby areas.

Palestinians view such raids as part of an effort to cement Israeli control over the territory, where 3 million Palestinians live under military rule. The deadly raids have caused destruction in urban areas.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said he and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had ordered the military to 'increase the intensity of the activity to thwart terrorism in the Tulkarem refugee camp and in all refugee camps' in the West Bank.

Katz earlier said he instructed the military to prepare for 'an extended stay' in some of the West Bank's urban refugee camps, from where he said about 40,000 Palestinians have fled It was not clear how long Palestinians would be prevented from returning.

Tanks were last deployed in the territory in 2002, when Israel fought a deadly Palestinian uprising. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

EX-PM APOLOGISES OVER MASSACRE

Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra apologised Sunday over the deaths of scores of Muslim protesters who suffocated in army trucks two decades ago in the country's south. Thaksin, who was premier at the time, said Sunday he wanted to apologise for any actions that may have made people "feel uneasy". "If there was any mistake or any discontent caused by me, I would like to apologise."

Don claims $18mn given to India to help with polls

WASHINGTON

AMERICAN President Donald Trump has claimed that the Biden administration allocated $18 million in funding to India to help with its elections, arguing that the country doesn't need this money.

His remarks during a speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on Saturday after he repeatedly attacked the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for allocating $21 million in funding to India for 'voter turnout'. In his speech, Trump also accused India of taking advantage of the US.

"18 million dollars for helping India with its elections. Why the hell? Why don't we just go to old paper ballots, and let them help us with their elections, right? Voter ID. Wouldn't that be nice? We're giving money to India for elections. They don't need money," he said.

"They take advantage of us pretty good. One of the highest tariff nations in the world...We have a 200% (tariffs) there and then we're giving them a lot of money to help them with their election," Trump said. Trump also criticised the USAID for giving $29 million to Bangladesh. *PTI*

Pope receiving supplemental oxygen: Vatican

ROME

POPE Francis remained in critical condition Sunday and blood tests show early kidney failure but he remains alert and 'well-oriented', and attended Mass, the Vatican said, as the 88-year-old pontiff battles pneumonia and a complex lung infection.

In a late update, the Vatican said Francis hadn't had any more respiratory crises since Saturday night but was still receiving high flows of supplemental oxygen.

Some blood tests showed "initial, mild, kidney failure", but doctors said it was under control. The decreased platelet count, necessary for clotting, that was first detected Saturday was stable.

"The complexity of the clinical picture, and the necessary wait for drug therapies to provide some feedback, dictate that the prognosis remains reserved," the doctors concluded.

Prayers for him poured in from around the world, from his native Argentina to the seat of Sunni Islam in Cairo to schoolchildren in Rome.

In New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan admitted what church leaders in Rome weren't saying publicly: that the Catholic faithful were united "at the bedside of a dying father". "As our Holy Father Pope Francis is in very, very fragile health, and probably close to death," Dolan said at St Patrick's Cathedral, without saying if he had independent information about the pope's condition. *AP*

Ready to quit if Ukraine gets NATO berth: Zelenskyy

KYIV

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday he would be ready to give up the presidency if it brought peace and NATO membership.

Speaking at a forum of government officials in Kyiv marking the three-year anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Zelenskyy said he would step down if doing so would achieve a lasting peace for his country under the security umbrella of the NATO military alliance.

"If to achieve peace, you really need me to give up my post, I'm ready," Zelenskyy said in response to a journalist's question on whether he'd trade his office for peace. "I can trade it for NATO."

Zelenskyy's comment appeared to be aimed at recent suggestions by U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin that elections should be held in Ukraine despite Ukrainian legislation prohibiting them during martial law.

Zelenskyy's comment comes hours after as he claimed Russia launched more strike drones into Ukraine overnight on Saturday

Voldymyr Zelenskyy

than in any other single attack of the war. Writing on social media, Zelenskyy said 267 strike drones had been sent in what he called 'the largest attack since Iranian drones began hitting Ukrainian cities and villages.' Three ballistic missiles had also been fired, the air force said.

The attack came as leaders in Kyiv and across Europe are seeking to navigate rapid changes in US foreign policy under President Donald Trump, who in a matter of days has upended years of firm support for Ukraine, leading to fears that he would join with Moscow to force a settlement to the war without involving Ukraine. *Agencies*

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, the undersigned Advocate on behalf of my client **Veena A and Another,** has filed the above Petition for the death certificate. The Petitioners are daughters of **LATE ARASAPPA S/O LATE VENKATARAMANAPPA was died on 22/04/2013** at Tarahunase Village and Post, Yalahanka Taluk, Jala Hobli, Bangalore Urban District, and Karnataka-562157. If any parties who have objections may dispute regarding the same can appear before the Additional Civil Judge and JMFC at Devanahalli and date of hearing **on 28.03.25 at 11.00 A.M. in C.Mis. No 81/2025.**

By Order of the Court, Sd/- Chief Ministerial Officer Civil Judge & JMFC Court, Devanahalli Smt. Chandrakala .B, Advocate

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, the undersigned Advocate on behalf of my client **Veena A and Another,** has filed the above Petition for the death certificate. The Petitioners are daughter of **LATE NAGARATHANA W/O LATE ARASAPPA was died on 01/08/2001** at Tarahunase Village and Post, Yalahanka Taluk, Jala Hobli, Banglore Urban District, and Karnataka-562157. If any parties who have objections may dispute regarding the same can appear before the Additional Civil Judge and JMFC at Devanahalli and date of hearing **on 28.03.2025 at 11.00 A.M. in C.Mis.No. 80/2025.**

By Order of the Court, Sd/- Chief Ministerial Officer Civil Judge & JMFC Court, Devanahalli Smt. Chandrakala .B, Advocate

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF THE XII ADDL. CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE AT BENGALURU [CCH-27]
O.S. No. 3188/2023

PLAINTIFF: SRI. MANJUNATHA T. A R/at: #32, Ground Floor, 18th Main, 2nd Cross, Munireddy Layout, Padmanabhanagar, Bangalore South, Bengaluru -560061. **V/s**
DEFENDANTS: SRI. MAHESH PATEL & Ors.
NOTICE/SUMMONS TO THE DEFENDANT No.3
To, SMT. ERAMMA, DEFENDANT No.3
R/at: Bangalore Dakshina Taluk Uttarhalli Hobli, BBMP ward No. 194, Kothanur Grama, Khata No. 19, Site No. 58, Bangalore -560083.

Whereas the Plaintiff named above instituted a suit for Declaration against you. You are hereby summoned to appear before this court on **19.03.2025 at 11 a.m.** in person or through an Advocate/pleader to answer the questions to the same. Failing which the suit will be heard and determined as ex-parte.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing gottigere ward No.19, BBMP Katha No. 939/1754/1494/58, in 58 situated at Kottanur Village, Uttarahali Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore, measuring East to West: 32 feet, and North to South: 28 feet, totally measuring an area of 896 square feet and bounded as follows:
East By: Road. **West by:** Other Property.
North by: Other Property. **South by:** Site No. 59.
Given under my hand & Seal of the Court, this 19th day of February 2025.

By Order of the Court, Sd/- Senior Sheristedar City Civil Court, Bangalore

ADVOCATE FOR THE PLAINTIFF,
Hiran Krishnaswamy, B.com, LLM, ACA, CFE.
D6, 2nd Floor, Devatha Plaza, Residency Rd., Bangalore - 25, Mob: +91-702-286-7849.
advocate.hkswamy@gmail.com

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II AT BANGALORE

BSNL Building 4th Floor, Telephone House Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore–560 001.

O. A. No.1621 OF 2022

Between: Canara Bank, DVG Road Branch, Bangalore - 560 004 . **...Applicant And**
Mr. Anil Kumar R. And Another ...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993
To:
Def: 1. Mr. Anil Kumar R., S/o. Late Raju, Aged about 36 years, R/a. No. 1844, 22nd Main, 25th Cross, Sector - 2, HSR Layout, Bangalore - 560 102.
Def: 2. M/s S.K. R. Gardens Represented by its Managing Partner, Smt. B. M. Sudha Reddy, Aged about 49 Years, No. 218, 27th Main, Sector -2, HSR Layout, Bangalore - 560 102.

Whereas, the above named Applicant has instituted an Application U/s 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993, against the Defendant for recovery of a sum of **Rs.78,70,000/-** along with interest at 10.80 % p.a. compounded monthly from date of application till date of recovery. You are required to show cause within 30 days of the service of the summons or on **16.04.2025 at 10.30 A.M.** as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that, in case of default the Application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the **11th day of February 2025 at Bangalore.**

Sd/- Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal -II, Bangalore- 560 001

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, AT BANGALORE

4th Floor, BSNL Building, Rajbhavan Road, Bengaluru- 560 001

O.A. No.703/2023

In the matter of : **STATE BANK OF INDIA,** RACPC- Basavanagudi Branch, Bengaluru **...Applicant Bank**
AND
Ms. Revati Shridhar, D/o. Shridhar Sitaraman And Others. **...Defendants**

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANTS UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF RDB ACT, 1993 (as amended)

To : 1. Ms. Revati Shridhar, aged 30 years, D/o. Mr. Shridhar Sitaraman, R/o. No. 320, 2nd Cross, 3rd Main, BEL Layout, 5th Stage, Rajarajeshwarinagar, Bengaluru - 560 098, PAN: GBRPS9227M : AADHAR: 336929684579; Mobile : 9986034499, Mail: revati.shridhar3@gmail.com . **...Defendant No. 1**

WHEREAS, the Applicant has instituted an Application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 (as amended) against the Defendants for a sum of **Rs.55,52,577/-** as mentioned in the Original Application together with current and future interest and other reliefs. You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days of the publication of summons/ notice or on **03.04.2025 at 10.30 a.m.** in person or by a Pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this the **28.01.2025**

By order of the Tribunal Sd/-Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal-2 Bengaluru - 560 001.

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - I, AT BANGALORE

BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore–560 001.

O.A. No.427/ 2024

State Bank of India Constitued under the State Bank of India Act 1955, Having its Corporate Office at Mumbai and amongst other Branches one called RACPC St. Mark's Road Branch, Bangalore- represented by Chief Manager, Stressed Assets Recovery Branch, at No.11/90, 3rd Floor, Near old Shivaji Talikes J.C Road, Bangalore- 560 002, Sri H. V. Ravi Prakash, Ph. No. 080 - 25943663, Mobile No.94498 42910, E- Mail- sbi.05173 @sbi.co.in, IFSC Code SBIN0005173. **....Applicant**
V/s
Sri Arifulla, Aged about 42 years, S/o. Sri Abdul Subhan, No. 715, 3rd Cross, 9th Main, AECS Layout, Singasandra, Bengaluru - 560 068. DOB- 01.08.1981, PAN No. AMUPA2634G . **...DEFENDANTS**

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES

Sri Arifulla, Aged about 42 years, S/o. Sri Abdul Subhan, No. 715, 3rd Cross, 9th Main, AECS Layout, Singasandra, Bengaluru - 560 068. DOB- 01.08.1981, PAN No. AMUPA2634G . **...DEFENDANT**

Whereas, the applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act,1993 against the defendant for recovery of a Sum of **Rs.20,60,490.00** (Rupees Twenty Lakhs Sixty Thousand Four Hundred and Ninety Only), together with current and future interest an for other reliefs.

The above mentioned defendant is therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent in support of the defense to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **17.07.2025 at 10:30 A.M.,** as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this **12.02.2025.**

Sd/- Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal -I, Bangalore- 560 001

Advocate for the Applicant
T. S Krishna Murthy, No. 64/1, Dr. D. V. G. Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 04.

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -I

4th Floor, BSNL Telephone Building, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore

Original Application No.1796/2023

Between: Canara Bank ...Applicant
And
Jagadish Kukreja & Another ...Defendants

1.Jagadish Kukreja, S/o. Kouna Ram Kukreja, Major by age, Pan No. AAPPK4732Q, Aadhar No. 7338305003.
2. Pushpa Kukreja W/o. Jagadish Kukreja, age Major, Pan No. AALPK4078Q, Aadhar No. 800171930481
Both are No. B1801, Sky Lark Esta, Seetharam Playa, Hoodi, Bengaluru - 560 048.
Also R/at: House No. 22, 2nd Floor, Road No. 62, Near Central Park, Panjabi West, Panjabi bagh- West Delhi - 110 026. **...Defendants**

SUMMONSTO DEFENDANT No. 1& 2 ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an Application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs.27,95,302.88** (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakhs Ninety Five Thousand Three Hundred and Two and Paise Eighty Eight Only) from the loan account together with the agreed rate of current and future interest with costs and other relief/s.

You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of the summons on or before **24.04.2025** at **10:30 AM** in the forenoon in person or by a pleader / Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal, on this the **23.01.2025**

By Order of the Tribunal Sd/- Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal -I, Bangalore

Advocate for Applicant Bank
Veeresh Kumar Javali M. C, Advocate Off 100/7, Sudarshan, 3rd Floor, 6th Main Road, 3rd Stage, 3rd Block, Basaveshwara Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 079 M: 9844973752 E-mail: vjavalli190@gmail.com

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE XXXVIII ADDL CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE, AT BENGALURU (CCH-39)
P & S.C. No. 719 /2024

BETWEEN: 1. SMT. MANJULA PRAKASH, W/o N. Prakash D/o Late. Sri. N.K. Nagaraj, Aged about 59 years, Residing at No.75, Mount Joy 50 ft Road, Hanumanthnagar, Gavipuram Extension, Bangalore- 560 019
2. SMT. KUSUMA RUDRAMURTHY, W/o Rudramurthy D/o Late Sri. N.K. Nagaraj, Aged about 58 years, Residing at No.11, Girija Raksha Nilya, 5th Main Road, 4th Cross Chamarajpet, Bangalore- 560 018 ... **Petitioners**
AND: Nil ... **Respondent**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the Petitioners named above have filed a petition under section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, For the grant of Succession Certificate in favour of the petitioners, in respect of schedule mentioned below. This pertains to the assets held by deceased, late Smt. N.K. Girijambike W/o late Sri. C.R. Gangaraju, The Paternal Aunt (Father's sister) of the Petitioner who expired on 27-06-2024. Petitioner No.1 being the caretaker of the deceased.

Interested parties are hereby called upon to appear before this court in person or by pleader duly instructed on **10-03-2025** at **11 am.** Inform to show cause against the petitioners failing wherein the appearance will be heard and declared as Exparte.

SCHEDULE

Fixed Deposit /Savings A/c No BANK	Deposit Amount (Rs.)
002120350001277 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	1,00,000/-
002120350001314 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	2,00,000/-
002120350001291 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	4,00,000/-
002124380000264 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	1,50,000/-
002124380000291 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	100,000/-
002124380000176 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	1,50,000/-
SB A/C No. 002110100032671 Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Ltd, K.H. Road, Bengaluru	7,76,434/-
SB A/C No.54016700991 State Bank of India,Wilson Garden Branch, Bengaluru	4,60,548/-
SB A/C 002005036575 Thyagaraja Cooperative Bank Ltd. Main Branch, Bengaluru	13,891/-

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on this 30-01-2025.

By Order of the Court, Senior Sheristedar, City Civil Court, Bengaluru.

Jai Mahadev Subramanyam K.P., Advocate No. 101/5, 1st C cross, 2nd Main, Banashankari 3rd Stage Bengaluru 560085.

201.3 MT of coal India imported during Apr-Dec of FY25 against 201.5 MT in the year-ago period

Follow these tips to reduce your loan EMI

Maintain good credit score, make larger downpayment to keep monthly installment low; negotiate with lender on rate

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made the first baby-step towards an easy money regime on February 7 by reducing the benchmark lending rate by a quarter of a percentage – well after four long years and nine months. But the cheer was not really shared by all borrowers as about 60% of the loans are still tied to the opaque MCLR (marginal cost-based lending rate) interest rate setting regime and only 40% of the loans are linked to the most transparent repo rate, called the EBLR or external benchmark linked lending rate.

The EBLR regime, in its original form, meant that any change in repo rate – the rate at which the RBI lends to banks – should immediately reflect in the existing loan rates. But borrowers very often don't get that positive benefit – reduction in floating rates of loans.

For instance, in the present instance of the rate cut by the RBI earlier this month, some seven banks, including Bank of Baroda and PNB passed on the benefit to existing borrowers but when the market leader – State Bank of India -- woke up to do so after 10 days, it did not lower the rates for existing customers but for new retail and small business borrowers.

How to lower your EMIs?

You need to maintain a good credit score, choose the right loan tenure, go for a floating interest rate, negotiate with your lender, make a larger downpayment and consider moving to another lender especially if it's a long-term home loan.

Improve your credit score

When you seek a loan or want to transfer your loan to another bank or to get your interest rate reduced, one of the important conditions is to have a good credit score of 800 and above 900 is peak score. The better your credit score, the lower will be the rate.

Choose the Right Loan Tenor

Though a longer tenure will translate to a lower EMI, the interest you will end up paying will be much higher. A 10-year home loan is the most ideal as the principal portion in your EMI will be almost 65% your EMI amount.

Opt for a floating rate

Home loans are offered on fixed and floating interest rates depending on your demand. Fixed rates remain constant throughout the loan tenure — but the rate will change if there are three consecutive repo rate hikes. As the word means, floating rates keep changing depending on the market conditions. Generally, floating rates are lower than fixed rates, which makes them a more cost-effective option in the long run.

Occasional down payments

A down payment is a lump sum amount you pay in one go after taking a loan, which can normally be done after six months of the loan.

A healthy down payment also shows the lender that you are committed to repaying your loan, which makes you a less risky borrower.

Transfer loan to other lender

If you have been repaying your loan for a few years and have a good repayment history, you can consider transferring your loan to another lender who offers a lower interest rate.

However, before you make the switch, please calculate the costs involved in the transfer such as processing fee, franking fee or any other associated expenses and calculate the total cost of the would be available interest rate.

IN CONVERSATION

NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI
Group chairman, Hiranandani group

'Ease of doing biz is still a far cry at the ground level'

THE Hiranandani group is lining up nearly ₹7,000 crore in five projects in and around megalopolis in next two fiscal. In an interaction with **Benn Kochuveedan**, group chairman **Niranjan Hiranandani** says though the government push for improving ease of doing business has been a success from top-level, a lot needs to improve from the bottom-up levels where industries face delays even today. An excerpt:

How has been your experience as a builder of iconic townships since the government pushed on improving the ease of doing business at the ground level? Has your life really changed as in being projected?
There is a palpable change at the top level. But I will stick my neck out and say the desired changes, when looked at from a bottom-up level, is much to be wanted. A lot needs to change from the ground level and upwards. This is not my experience alone, this is what every other builder, every other industrialist, who are still flitting in and flitting out of the myriad government offices, face. A lot has positively changed from the top for sure because the prime minister himself has been driving it, but the actual change, which has to be at the ground level, which can really make the real difference, is still missing badly.

What are your suggestions for actual ease of doing business?
Let the change happen at those levels who issue the permissions.

You have made a shift in your approach to building townships by tying up with a little-known Pune developer called Krisala for developing a posh residential township in the Pune IT hub of Hinjewadi. What is the rationale for this model? Will this be your model going forward?
Yes and no. As the market evolves, we will need to evolve. In the management of Krisala, I've seen the urge which I had 25-30 years ago. This is a win-win for both of us. I have been owning this 105 acres since 2008 and wanted to make it as big and or even bigger than my Powai, Thane or Panvel projects; but could not make it happen so far. So in Krisala I found a group of young people who share my vision of building large townships. Most of my upcoming projects are planned for big way that we have been doing our projects. We have 3 projects – Oshiwara and Versova in the northwestern suburbs will be joint development with existing residents and Wakaleshwar in south Mumbai will be a redevelopment – planned in Mumbai. The biggest of all will be the one planned in Alibaug which will be residential-cum-hospitality venture that will come up on sprawling 250 acres across eastern bay.

I don't want foreign investors sitting a day's flight away, to decide when and how I should be happy. My son heads data centre business, which filed for a Nasdaq listing

What are the capex plans for these upcoming projects?
All these 5 projects, including the one in Hinjewadi, should consume ₹6,000-₹7,000 crore during their construction. We're sitting on 2,000 acres, spread across many cities - the biggest is the 350-acre plot in Sindhudurg, 250 acres in Talegaon, which is 50% owned by Blackstone, 250 acres in Alibaug, 105 acres in Hinjewadi and the rest elsewhere in cities like Nashik, Bengaluru, Chennai etc.

Any plans for a market debut?
Not at all. I don't want someone else, say some foreign investor sitting a day's flight away, to decide when and how I should be happy. Yes, we have, rather my son who heads our data centre business, filed for a Nasdaq listing.

You had made announcement some years ago to enter data centre business ₹10,000 crore investment. How is it doing?
I can't answer anything on Yotta. For one, we are under a strict silence period having applied for the American regulator's (SEC) approval for a Nasdaq listing a few months back, and for another I don't handle that business at all.

MONEY-WISE

32-YEAR OLD SHOULD KNOW THESE THINGS

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

AT 32, you're likely in a phase of life where you're balancing career growth, personal goals, and possibly family responsibilities. Here's a rundown of personal finance concepts and strategies that are relevant at this age:

- **Budgeting and cash flow:**
- Know how to track your income and expenses: By now, you should have a clear picture of where your money goes — housing, food, transportation, entertainment, etc.
- Aim for the 50/30/20 rule as a starting point: 50% of income to needs, 30% to wants, 20% to savings/debt repayment.
- **Emergency Fund:**
- Have 3-6 months' worth of expenses saved in easily accessible account: At 32, unexpected events — job loss, medical issues — can hit if you've taken on more responsibilities (mortgage, dependent parents or kids).
- **Debt Management:**
- Understand difference between "good" debt (mortgage with a low interest rate) and "bad" debt (high-interest credit cards). Prioritise paying off the latter — aim to keep credit card balances at zero each month.
- If you've got expensive loans, explore repayment strategies (refinancing for a lower rate)
- **Retirement Savings:**
- Start (or keep) contributing to retirement funds like PPF, PF of employer, NSS, etc.
- A rough goal: By your early 30s, aim to have 1.5x your annual salary saved for retirement. If your CTC is ₹30L, retirement funds should be at least ₹45L
- **Investing basics:**
- Beyond retirement accounts, dip into low-cost index funds or ETFs if you've extra cash. Equity is more volatile but offer growth over decades — perfect for a 32-year-old.
- Beware of trading, Options, Bitcoins. Invest, don't trade.
- **Credit Score:**
- Know your score and what affects it (payment history, credit utilisation). A good score (700+) saves you money on loans — like a mortgage you might be eyeing. Pay bills on time, keep credit card balances low.
- **Insurance:**
- Get right coverage: Health insurance is non-negotiable, you need insurance over and above what your employer gives you!
- Consider life insurance if you've got dependents (parents, spouse, kids). Term life is usually cheaper, efficient and sufficient. Disability insurance is worth a look if your income's critical to your lifestyle and you have big loans.
- **Big Purchases and Goals:**
- Thinking about a house? Understand down payments (40% is ideal), mortgage rates, and how much house you can afford (rule of thumb: no more than 5x your annual income).
- Plan for other goals — travel, starting business, education with separate savings buckets.
- **Taxes:**
- Know basics of your tax bracket and deductions. If you're self-employed or freelancing, set aside 25-30% of income for taxes.
- **Mindset and habits**
- Avoid lifestyle inflation— don't let a raise mean a fancier life-style unless your investment goals are met.
- Review your finances regularly. At 32, you've got time to course-correct, but habits now set the tone for your 40s and beyond.

MONEY MATTERS

THE WARREN BUFFETT WAY OF PATIENT INVESTING

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

IF investors were to be measured based on temperament, there would perhaps be nobody like Warren Buffett, the legendary American investor. In his annual letter to shareholders, a tradition he has followed for 60 years, he shows why stock market investing is about patience. On one hand, he is committed to investing the company's money in equity assets. On the other hand, he has piled up cash, cash equivalent, and liquid US treasury investment ($ 332), which probably dwarfs the foreign exchange reserves of over 140 countries. The pile has more than doubled over the past four years.

If you regularly follow his shareholder letters, you could have read his commentary about fortifying the company against any eventuality. He has often explained that the company's finances are impregnable because of its cash and liquid assets on the balance sheet. He argues in his letters that there has been no finish line at Berkshire Hathaway over the years and that the company is built to last.

There is an advantage in having a higher cash position when share prices are at a record high. The opportunity arrives when share prices start to fall. Whenever prices of fundamentally strong and growing businesses get reasonable, the cash can be deployed in those businesses. Buffett demonstrated that during the global financial crisis. Berkshire acquired minority stakes in companies like Wrigley's, Goldman Sachs and General Electric when stock markets went into a spiral. Berkshire acquired a sizeable stake in Bank of America a few years later.

MANDAR PARDIKAR

Your finances

Your personal finances require you to learn about patience. The average holding of a systematic investment plan in an equity mutual fund is about three to five years. Equity investing is all about the long-term. You cannot evaluate your investment in the stock market with that of a fixed deposit or a guaranteed return product of the government. The way you deploy your monthly surplus depends on the nature of your financial goals.

If you put aside money for your retirement, you must allocate it to equity assets. It is the money that eventually pays you. Hence, you cannot touch that part of your investment for short-term needs. You can start your investing by building a sizeable emergency corpus. If you speak to a financial advisor, they recommend an amount equivalent to six months of expenses. You can also look for a comprehensive health insurance plan for your family. After that, it is essential to determine your long-term and short-term financial goals. Long-term goals require a higher equity allocation, while short-term goals require a higher fixed-income allocation.

If you actively manage your stock portfolio, you will most likely be a trader. Very few in India are building an equity portfolio with the temperament of 'buy and hold'. There are even fewer people who sell at peak and create a cash war chest for an imminent fall. People find it hard to believe that stock markets would move in cycles and not linearly. The strong performance of Indian equities over the years was due to a strong underlying profit growth. It is unmatched in any other market. Even then, growth is rarely linear. Those of you who understand that would keep cash aside for seizing opportunities. The idea is to protect your financial position when prices fall.

In most cases, there is this urge to get rich quickly. Staying invested delays gratification but is far more rewarding. Berkshire Hathaway's impregnable financial position is an example of delaying gratification in investing. Your finances can also benefit if you take a leaf from the Berkshire way. You can create wealth for yourself and your family that will last beyond you.

Mkt may see record FII exodus in FY25

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

DOMESTIC equity market may see record annual foreign institutional investor (FII) exodus in financial year (FY25), surpassing the previous record outflow of ₹140,010 crore recorded in FY22 when the global equity market was rattled by the COVID-19 pandemic. As per the data from the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL), FII outflows in the current fiscal have already reached ₹112,204 crore. With the pace of selling accelerating in January and February 2025, there are high chances that FY25 outflows could easily exceed the FY22 figures.

In January alone, FIIs withdrew (net sales) ₹78,000 crore, marking the second-highest monthly outflow in Indian capital market history, just below the record ₹94,000 crore sold in October 2024. In February, outflows have already touched ₹23,700 crore. This trend starkly contrasts with FY24, which saw one of the highest FII inflows at ₹208,212 crore.

EXTERNAL FACTOR

External factor	Year FII inflows/ outflows (₹cr)
2024-25	-1,12,204
2023-24	2,08,212
2022-23	-37,632
2021-22	-14010
2020-21	2,74,032

Since late September, FIIs have been offloading Indian equities at unprecedented levels, raising concerns about the market's health and the broader economy. This sell-off has significantly impacted market benchmarks, with the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty plummeting by approximately 12-13% from their record high level seen in September 2024. The massive outflow has also contributed to the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar.

The sell-off is attributed to several factors. FIIs have been reallocating funds to markets like China, where valuations appear more attractive. US President's trade policy and its impact on emerging markets is another reason for this exodus. US bond yields and Dollar have gained significantly in the last free months, becoming a safe haven for FIIs.

Additionally, a weaker-than-expected Q2FY25 and Q3FY25 earnings season in India has fueled concerns.

V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services said that after Trump's victory in the US presidential elections, the US market has been attracting huge capital inflows from the rest of the world. But recently, China has emerged as a major destination for portfolio flows. The Chinese president's new initiatives with leading businessmen have kindled hopes of a growth recovery in China.

Adani cos paid ₹58K cr in global taxes in FY24

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Adani group, which has constantly come under scrutiny over its business practices, has said that the group's listed entities paid ₹58,104 crore in taxes and other contributions to government exchequer in 2023-24, showing a 25% gain year-on-year.

In the previous year, the company claims, paid Rs 46,610 crore in global taxes. The information was released through what it calls a Tax Transparency Reports for the financial year 2023-24 The report covers the group's listed entities – Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Green Energy, Adani Energy Solutions, Adani Power, Adani Total Gas, and Ambuja Cements. The figure also includes the tax paid by three other listed companies—NDTV, ACC and Sanghi Industries—that are held by the seven companies.

"Transparency is the foundation of trust, and trust is essential for sustainable growth," said Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, in a media statement. "As one of India's largest contributors to the exchequer, we recognise that our responsibility goes beyond compliance. It is also about operating with integrity and accountability. Every rupee we contribute to our nation's finances reflects our commitment to transparency and good governance.

Mcap of 8 most valued cos erodes ₹1.7L cr last week

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms eroded ₹1,65,784.9 crore last week, with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) taking the biggest hit, in line with bearish trends in equities.

The BSE benchmark declined 628.15 points, or 0.82% last week, while the Nifty fell 133.35 points, or 0.58%. The market valuation of TCS tanked ₹53,185.89 crore to ₹13,69,717.48 crore. Bharti Airtel's market capitalisation (mcap) dropped ₹44,407.77 crore to ₹9,34,223.77 crore. The valuation of ICICI Bank declined ₹18,235.45 crore to ₹8,70,579.68 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever plunged ₹17,962.62 crore to ₹5,26,684.38 crore.

Teenager Andreeva makes WTA history

Inspired by LeBron James and Roger Federer, Russian 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva wrapped up a fairytale week in Dubai by becoming the youngest ever WTA 1000 champion with victory over Clara Tauson on Saturday. After ousting three Grand Slam winners en route to the final, Andreeva beat Tauson 7-6 (1), 6-1.

Kohli & Co clear winners vs Pak

Senior batter's unbeaten century helps India beat rivals in yet another one-sided contest between two teams

GOMESH S @ Chennai

ON the third ball of the eleventh over during the chase at the Dubai International Stadium, Virat Kohli's blood pressure would have skyrocketed. The former India captain and No 3 was batting on eight of 12 balls and Rohit Sharma had already fallen in the powerplay. Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf hit the back of length precisely, making the ball climb onto Kohli who tried to pull from outside-off. The ball took the top edge and flew towards the third man fielder. Another wicket, another failure here for Kohli could have been a crucial blow for India at this stage. However, it ended up falling short of Nassem Shah and Kohli let out a sigh of relief.

That, however, was the last time Kohli looked out of sorts at the ring of fire on Sunday. From thereon, with a sub-par total of 242 in front of him, the chase master took over. Kohli's first boundary, a perfect cover drive that brought up his 14,000 ODI runs put him in a zone from which he never came out of. He looked assured in the crease, and picked the chase apart with singles and doubles while picking up an occasional boundary.

He stuck to his anchor role while others batted around him, and got to his fifty in 62 balls on a slowish Dubai surface. By this time, it seemed clear that he was not going to stop until he got his century and the win for India. And it showed in the deflated Pakistan mood on the field even as Shubman Gill fell to a beauty from Abrar Ahmed and Shreyas Iyer got out to a stunning catch from Imam-ul-Haq.

India's Kuldeep Yadav (2nd R) celebrates after dismissing Pakistan's Shaheen Afridi in Dubai on Sunday | AP

The real nemesis for Pakistan was Kohli. He had been there and done that on innumerable occasions over the past 15 years. Sunday was not going to be any different. Fittingly, Kohli brought up his 51st ODI and 82nd international hundred with a shot that also got India across the line in what was yet another one-sided India-Pakistan contest. "My job is to focus on my skill, and to be able to do the job for my team as much as I can. I kept telling myself on the field when I felt down was to 'give hundred percent every time I face up'. Sometimes I'll get the reward. That's why I take a lot of pride in working hard on the field," Kohli would say after the match. While Kohli stole the show with the bat, in the larger scheme of things, the theatre of India-Pakistan fell short of expectations once again. Pakistan, as they have done all but twice in the past decade, let go of momentum on crucial moments during both innings. So much so that midway through the chase, it would have taken a miracle for the Mohammad Rizwan-led side to come back into the contest. And they could not make it happen.

With the two teams not playing bilateral cricket, India and Pakistan have been slotted in the same group across every multi-nation tournament since 2013. Not just because of the rivalry but also the popularity and commercial aspect of the fixture. Fans fill up the stadium, viewership soars and millions get made from TV and digital commercials. To say that the world comes to a stop and does a digital watch party would not be an understatement. However, billed as the the most important fixture of the Champions Trophy, the tie once again failed to live up to the expectations in terms of on-field contest with India walking over Pakistan to seal a six-wicket win.

Brief scores: Pakistan 241 in 49.4 ovs (Shakeel 62, Rizwan 46; Pandya 2/31, Kuldeep 3/40) **lost to** India 244/4 in 42.3 ovs (Kohli 100 n.o, Gill 46, Iyer 56; Abrar 1/28).

Bangladesh vs New Zealand, Rawalpindi ● **Live on Star Sports & JioHotstar, 2.30 PM**

Hope for wrestlers as sports minister meets WFI chief

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

IN a big respite for the country's wrestlers, sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya met the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Sanjay Kumar Singh on Sunday. It is understood that the meeting was aimed at ensuring Indian wrestlers' participation at the upcoming Seniors Asian Championships scheduled in Amman, Jordan from March 25 to 30. This could also help in finding a solution to resolve the ongoing standoff between the sports ministry and WFI.

Notably, the ministry had suspended the WFI in December 2023 days after its polls wherein Sanjay Kumar was elected as the federation chief. Given the suspension, the ministry had not sanctioned WFI's proposals for sending the national teams for the two Ranking Series held earlier this month. However, if the Indian wrestlers miss the continental championships then as per the rule of the United World Wrestling, they will not qualify to compete at the World Championships slated from September 13 to 21 in Zagreb, Croatia. "The meeting lasted for around an hour and issues like the WFI's suspension and participation of the Indian wrestlers at the Asian Championships were discussed," said highly-placed sources.

With the meeting, chances of Indian wrestlers participating at the Asian meet have grown manifold as the sports ministry doesn't want them to miss the tournament. The last date to submit entries is February 25. To ensure participation, only WFI, which is recognised by the UWW, can send entries. It is learnt that the WFI has to tweak the already named squad for the two Ranking Series. Wrestlers, who did not feature in the squad, might still have a chance as some more names can be accommodated. Their inclusion, however, means some kind of a mechanism needs to be in place to select a wrestler for each weight category.

For that to happen, the WFI's suspension needs to be lifted because as per an order by the Delhi High Court, the WFI cannot organise selection trials and if it does so then it will amount to contempt of court. Incidentally, a hearing in that regard is scheduled on March 3 while another petition, wherein the WFI has challenged the suspension in a division bench, will be heard the next day.

As an expert explained, "It can be touch and go as provisional entries can be sent by the deadline but changes, if any after the selection trials, have to be done 10 or 15 days before the event begins. Such changes can be made on medical grounds. The WFI can only hold selection trials once the suspension is lifted otherwise the same set of wrestlers, who were picked up for the two Ranking Series, will be eligible to compete."

After the Sports Authority of India didn't sanction its proposal for the second Ranking Series, the WFI had made clear that it will not send Asian meet's proposal for clearance. Sanjay Singh while speaking to this daily had said that the federation will not seek SAI's sanction and arrange funds for the trip. However, the recent development will give some hope to wrestlers, who even tried meeting the sports minister once they realised that they wouldn't be competing at the second Ranking Series in Tirana, Albania.

They might not have got a chance to meet Mandaviya personally and share their grievances but the meeting on Sunday has made them optimistic. "We really hope the talks succeed as we cannot afford to miss the Asian tournament. If allowed, the Asian Championships will be our first international event this year and also a gateway for the Worlds," one of the aggrieved wrestlers told this daily.

Mo Salah (2nd R) scored his 25th goal of the Premier League season on Sunday | AFP

Liverpool two good for City, extend lead in EPL

AGENCIES @ London

LIVERPOOL took a giant stride towards the Premier League title on Sunday as a 2-0 win over Manchester City opened up an 11-point lead at the top of the table over Arsenal.

Mohamed Salah was again Liverpool's star performer as he opened the scoring with his 30th goal of the season before setting up Dominik Szoboszlai to double the lead before half-time. Just days after exiting the Champions League to Real Madrid, this was another sobering defeat for the dethroned English champions, who are now 20 points adrift of the leaders.

So often during Pep Guardiola's glorious reign, Liverpool have come up just short in English football's great rivalry of recent years. However, their time to match Manchester United's record of 20 English top-flight titles now appears just months away in Arne Slot's first season in charge. Earlier, Newcastle blew Nottingham Forest away with four goals in 11 minutes as Alexander Isak's double inspired a vital 4-3 win in the race to finish in the top four. Eddie Howe's side recovered from Callum Hudson-Odoi's early opener to run riot with a first half goal spree at St James' Park. Late on Saturday, Marco Asensio's first goals for Aston Villa clinched a dramatic 2-1 win against spluttering Chelsea after a costly blunder from Blues goalkeeper Filip Jorgensen.

Results: Sunday: Manchester City **0-2** Liverpool; Newcastle **4-3** Nottingham Forest. **Saturday:** Aston Villa **2-1** Chelsea.

Real go level with Barca

MADRID: Luka Modric scored a brilliant goal from long range to help Real Madrid secure a 2-0 win against Girona on Sunday which took them back level with Barcelona at the top of La Liga. Vinicius Junior wrapped up the win late on as Carlo Ancelotti's side produced a solid display at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Vasu's role in Kerala's Ranji run

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

EVEN as everyone is still reliving the thrilling fifth day that took Kerala to their first Ranji Trophy final, D Vasu is a happy man. The former Tamil Nadu all-rounder and former head coach is the Director of Cricket of Kerala Cricket Association High Performance centre and has a significant role in the successful campaign the team has had so far.

"Very happy with the way Kerala played to reach the Ranji final. My job is generally overall management and mentoring of players and coaches," Vasu told this daily.

The 57-year-old has been the Director of the TNCA Academy in the past and has wealth of experience in helping a talented unit become a match-winning one. Roped in by KCA in 2024, Vasu's has had his part in not just winning matches but also working towards improving the overall strength of cricket in the state. "I was aware that the Kerala players across formats and age-groups were a talented lot. Without grit and determination, talent alone will not blossom. I was keen to mentor and improve the mindset of players. Only if you believe that you can win, will results come," he added.

D Vasu, Director of Cricket of KCA

Vasu insists that KCA gave him a free hand and that the Kerala Premier League T20 tournament was a big morale booster. "The President and the secretary of KCA were the main drivers behind wanting to improve in red-ball cricket. Lot of work has gone into infrastructure, coaches development and camps. The administration worked with an open mindset and wanted the best for the cricketers. The advent of KPL T-20 format gave a lot of confidence and boost to the players," Vasu explained "Amay Khurasiya, OV Mazhar Moidu and M Rajagopal are the coaches put in a lot of work with the players. Their (coaches) hard work has been beneficial for the players," said Vasu, before adding, "Coaching Beyond and B Arun's contributions to fast bowlers and coaches development was a positive factor," said Vasu.

The 57-year-old said that reaching the Ranji final will have a long-lasting impact in the next generation of players. "This (reaching the final) is a great driver for change, self belief and motivates the next generation of Kerala players to dream to play for the Indian team," Vasu said.

As for the final, the veteran coach believes Kerala has the momentum with them. "Every player has contributed to the success so far, so I cannot single out one player who will be the key in the final. Vidarbha have the home advantage but Kerala has the momentum and the motivation to do well. The wicket and the toss could play a vital part as well," signed off Vasu.

EXPRESS READ

Services kabaddi team clinches national title

CUTTACK: Services emerged victorious in a nail-biting finale against Railways to claim the 71st senior national men's kabaddi championship here. The team with immense star-power prevailed 30-30 (6-4) in a tie-breaker, showcasing remarkable composure when it mattered most as the clash could have gone either way.

Indians make strong start in B'luru Open

BENGALURU: Indians made a strong start in the first round of Bengaluru Open 2025 qualifiers, with Davis Cup team members Karan Singh and Mukund Sasikumar registering impressive victories here on Sunday. Singh posted a 7-5, 6-3 win over Ukraine's Yurii Dzhavakian in the qualifying round. Sasikumar beat fellow Indian Rishi Reddy.

Man Singh, Bhagirathi claim top honours

NEW DELHI: Uttarakhand's Man Singh and Bhagirathi Bisht won the men's and women's titles, respectively, at the New Delhi Marathon race. The 35-year-old Singh clocked an impressive time of 2:15:24s to emerge winner in the men's section. Bhagirathi, also from Uttarakhand, topped among elite women with a time of 02:48:59s.

Mohun Bagan first team to defend ISL Shield

ENS @ Chennai

MOHUN Bagan Super Giant are Indian Super League (ISL) winners once again. The Kolkata club created history by posting a 1-0 win against Odisha FC at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Sunday.

But they had to wait for their success on the day. Just when it seemed like the tie could finish goalless, Dimitri Petratos scored in injury time to help Bagan secure three points, helping them take an unassailable lead with two games left in the season.

They have 52 points from 22 games and have a 10-point lead over second-placed FC Goa, who have played one game less. Even if Goa win their remaining ties, they won't be able to catch Bagan. Bagan have now become the first team to defend ISL title.

Mohun Bagan players celebrate after Dimitri Petratos' goal | ISL

FIH Pro League: Netherlands women's Midas Dutch on the hockey field

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@Bhubaneswar

IF the only true mark of excellence in a team sport is the big titles, the Dutch women's side is the gold standard. Or pretty close to it. For most teams, second or third can be good enough. For the women in Orange, it's either first or nothing. Win big or don't bother turning up.

There is a sort of legend associated with South Korean archers and how it's harder to win their national championships than the Olympics. It's how life is in the Netherlands if you are a women's hockey player. "(In my opinion) getting into the team is harder," says assistant coach, Sjoerd Marijne. It's a thought echoed by Emma Reijnen, one of several newish faces at the Pro League in Bhubaneswar. "It's hard to get into the side," Reijnen, a former Under-21 captain, says.

Before delving into what has made them an unstoppable force in women's hockey, a look at all the gongs they have won over the last 10 years. World Cups (2006, 2014, 2018 and 2022), Olympics (2008, 2012, 2020 and 2024), Euros (2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023) Pro League (2019, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024)... there's enough pot of gold to run a small jewellery firm.

The short, one-sentence answer is an 'unparalleled club structure' when compared to anywhere else in the world. The longer answer? Unsexy catch-all phrases like hard work.

Here's Pien Sanders, the team skipper. "Three points in the bag," she says after beating England 5-1 in a Pro League match last week at the Kalinga Stadium. "Five goals scored but a lot to improve." There in lies their unquenchable thirst to keep improving. "Will go back to the hotel, watch clips and see where we can improve as a team.

"We always want to be 1% better than yesterday. The culture of our team is just hard work. We are a hockey country and the young players are all very talented so we have to keep giving our best to retain our spot in the side."

It's true. If they don't keep improving, they could be replaced by players back home patiently waiting for their chances. "Some players who didn't play today," Marijne says, "would be the best players in other teams. It's the kind of pressure they are used to, it's the culture and they grow up with it. It's nothing new for them."

Netherlands women's hockey team has been the gold standard | HI

The point about patience is also referenced by Reijnen, who began her senior career last year. "I have featured for the Under-16, Under-18 and the Under-21s... you kind of need to be patient to get into the national team. Keep doing your own things well and hope."

How do players like Reijnen stay motivated? "The gold medal always helps," she smiles. However, they know they can never slack because if they aren't at their best, there is the constant threat of being replaced by players. "If you aren't good enough, you can be replaced by another player."

In another sports team, it may promote toxicity or a negative environment but because these players are so used to winning and what it takes to get to that stage and stay there, they view this sort of cut-throat competition as healthy. "They are always looking to do things better," coach Raoul Ehren, who was appointed to the post post the Paris Games, says. "We are trying to write a new book."

What's it like to 'coach' this side? "They are always looking to improve," he says. "They are fighting for their spot so no one wants to take it easy. If they do, someone else may take that spot." There's also the debrief aspect after games. For example, they may have beaten England 5-1 in a game last week but Ehren and Sanders weren't happy because they wanted to score more goals from the chances they created. Also, they allowed England a few pops at their own goal. "It (the place for competition) starts at the youth level," Ehren says. "We have a good club structure, have a good league. It's my job to get the best players together. Youth, club structure and there's a lot of potential coming through."

They are the reigning World, European and Olympic champions. Ehren, Sanders, Marijne and Reijnen are confident of one thing. "There's always scope for improvement."

A scary proposition. For the opposition.

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24 February, 2025 | 10:00 AM

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24.02.2025
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Satellite launch

Japan launched its fourth spy satellite into orbit on this day in 2007, bolstering its capacity to gather intelligence independently

H-2A ROCKET

The satellite, along with a smaller test prototype, was launched from the country's space centre on a remote island in southern Japan aboard an H-2A rocket

TWO STAGES

The H-2A rocket consists of two stages, designed to carry satellites into various orbits. The first stage uses liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen

SPY SPACECRAFTS

China operated 136 reconnaissance satellites in 2022, according to the Military Balance report by International Institute for Strategic Studies

Secrets from Sindh
PG 3

A still from *Mrs.*

Kavitha Lankesh, writer-director

I don't understand 'too feminist', it's like saying "Dalits are getting too empowered." When the original movie was made, nobody made noise throughout South India. Suddenly it's released in Hindi and they are fighting. They should watch more movies which are sensitive to womankind, unlike toxic films like *Animal*.

KM Chaitanya, film director

Remaking an acclaimed film is complex. It isn't just adapting from Malayalam to Hindi but about finding parallels to the language, caste, religion and other nuances in the original. A project like this is fraught with comparisons which may be the reason for so much criticism. That aside, feminism is an important need in today's society. There is nothing called 'toxic feminism'. Patriarchy has been around for centuries and needs to be dismantled. Even if it means taking a little extra tilt towards the liberation of women, gender equality must be established.

ANJALI RAM AND GAYATHRI M KURUP

FOR many netizens, the last few days have been witness to blazing arguments on the Bollywood film *Mrs.* starring Sanya Malhotra, directed by Aarti Yadhav – a remake of the popular Malayalam movie *The Great Indian Kitchen*. Since its recent OTT release, the film's portrayal of the pressure placed on women by gender roles in a domestic setting has garnered praise for authentically portraying homemakers' experiences while others have criticised it for toning down the vivid imagery of the original. Controversy has also been stirred up after a Bengaluru-based men's rights organisation called Save Indian Family Foundation (SIFF), accused the film of spreading 'toxic feminist propaganda' and claimed 'cooking is like meditation'.

A still from the film

Boiling Over

Sanya-Malhotra-starrer *Mrs.*, a Hindi remake of the Malayalam hit *The Great Indian Kitchen*, has sparked a controversy on social media with some praising its authentic portrayal of women's lives and others considering it an attack on men. We ask Bengaluru's film fraternity: is this uproar justified?

Anjali R Pillai, film content creator

A simple scene shows Richa on a call with her friend and her husband who have an equal partnership – contrasting her reality. This makes it clear that the movie's issue is not with men, but the systemic imposition of gender roles. SIFF's remarks create unnecessary confusion around an important conversation about gender equality. It has ruffled the feathers of the exact kind of men who propagate such systematic impositions.

Mithilesh Edavalath, filmmaker

You need to have sensibility, sensitivity and a humane approach to understand these problems. It was never a perfect family in an Indian scenario. There was always a woman working in the kitchen who dreamt of something else. We are in this comfortable seat built on oppression and the moment someone shakes it, we have a problem. We don't see what is below it – oppression. Let's deal with this first; it's been going on for a long time.

Godwin Emmanuel, film studies prof

A lot of men's rights organisations think feminism is hating men. The movie *Barbie* (2023) also faced this during release. Many people have different versions of toxic femininity.The movie is not about hating men but about equality. It is just trying to show the patriarchal structure that is presented in an Indian family – exposing toxic masculinity. I find it silly to call this movie toxic feminism.

Neethu Shetty, actor

The intention is portraying the intangible things that a woman does which aren't appreciated. Of course, both genders are working on the subtler lines between what goes on in a woman's heart – is she feeling appreciated and included or relegated to one part of the family's routine? Just doing one thing with nobody to support her or engage with intellectually can be really frustrating for today's women who are far more educated and have independence in their blood.

Post
RidzSups
@ridzsups
Men after watching #Mrs .... 'My mother cooked four meals a day, cleaned the house, raised kids but never complained'
Let's talk about it then....She didn't do all that because she wanted to, she did it because she had no choice. The system, our society told her that this is your
832 Reposts 62 Quotes 7,206 Likes 367 Bookmarks
Dr Shivam 'da'
@angryoldman27
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Movies like this have a basic pattern -
Take something which is normal - in this case, women cooking at home- then blow it to an extreme that paints it as a form of great suffering.
Imagine a movie being made for a man, where he is shown as a 9-5 office worker, and that every
Berlin. @BerlinFamilyman · 15 Feb
Modern media always paints men as villains through exaggerated narratives, fueling misandry under the guise of empowerment. Movies like Thappad, Mrs., Darlings turn isolated incidents into universal truths, shaping young minds to distrust men and bat their blood.
#MenToo

MORE TO METAL

Members of Bengaluru-based metal band The Down Troddence, whose lineup includes renowned music composer Sushin Shyam, talk about their new album AYAKTIHIS

ANJALI RAM

The Down Troddence

For many, 'metal' conjures only loud music, a rebellious attitude and dark clothes. But for The Down Troddence, metal is more than these stereotypes; it is a tool of artistic exploration of intense topics. With a history of almost 15 years, blending different genres and layered compositions, TDT has recently released their new album AYAKTIHIS (As You All Know, This Is How It Is), on February 20.

Hailing from Kannur, Kerala, the band moved to Bengaluru in 2011. Ever since, TDT has been challenging norms and pushing boundaries through a fusion of sounds that resonate deeply within the Indian metal scene. Back in the mid-2000s, when access to Western music was not prominent, the band found its core members. What started as a bedroom jamming project evolved into their first song *Death Vanity*, and later with the lineup, including Kerala state award winner and renowned music director Sushin Shyam, TDT released their album How Are You? We Are Fine, Thank You in 2013.

When asked about the long window between the albums, the lead vocalist of the band, Munz, says, "To write music is a completely different process. Nezher, the bassist and Sushin, the keyboardist, are music directors. Over the past 10 years, they would have written 200-300 songs for their projects. It's not because we can't write music. It's just that when we come together as a band and try to write music, it has to mean something, so it takes time. Writing songs for the new album started in 2014."

While metal is often associated with aggression, TDT's music has a refreshing blend of metal with other genres like Carnatic, jazz and electronica. "As musicians, we are growing, blending and learning constantly with influences. 60 per cent of the things might be metal, the rest of them are different influences," says Munz on the new album.

At the same time, the band's political stance is evident with themes they deal with, primarily surrounding current political concerns; one such song is *Ejjathi*, which talks about casteism. "Metal is a very powerful medium for conveying as it deals with extreme emotions. And extreme emotion requires extreme music. That's why I'm growling," Munz adds.

Sushin Shyam

Munz

Munz also recounts how there was no discrimination back in 2006-2015 when the band moved to the city. The support the band received from old-school and new school music was phenomenal, further allowing the band to grow. "We are grateful for the platform Bengaluru has given us; there were so many venues and gigs happening," he recalls. What sets them apart is how their breaking of stereotypes is an ever-evolving process. Their album names are an example of how they enjoy breaking the stereotype inside the metal scene by not adhering to typical names seen in the genre.

Now, with the release of AYAKTIHIS, their message is louder than their music – metal is not just about sound but also substance. "Any art for that matter should move people to think differently. But that is not the only purpose of art," says Munz, adding, "We can be nice people and play extreme music. We can have fun and still talk about serious things."

Snap From the Past

A humble street vendor in Indiranagar, Azmad, shares his passion for analogue photography with affordable yet unique vintage cameras

GAYATHRI M KURUP

AMID the lively streets of Indiranagar, a middle-aged man sits on one of the pavements, sharing his life's love with every passerby. This is **Azmad** 'bhaiyya', who sells his lifetime collection of vintage cameras sitting on 100 ft Road. In an era where digital photography dominates, Azmad believes there is an irreplaceable charm in old cameras. "Digital cameras are everywhere," he says, "But these vintage cameras – you won't find them anymore. Even if you go back in time, these are rare."

Azmad's journey started in Dubai, where he bought his first camera. His passion quickly grew and he began collecting more, keeping them in his house with dreams of being a collector. But, when the lockdown disrupted his life, he made a decision – he would sell his collection. What started as a hobby turned into an 18-year-long journey of sourcing and curating, followed by selling vintage cameras to passionate buyers.

Sourcing these cameras is no easy task. Unlike modern gadgets that can be ordered online, he travels to remote villages, searching for hidden treasures. "It's very hard to find cameras. Sometimes I go to a village and come back empty-handed. Other times, I find two or three cameras," he shares. He notes that Mumbai was once a hotspot but as the years passed, stock went down. Now, he relies on his village contacts who help him locate and acquire cameras.

His collection features brands that photography enthusiast go crazy about like Rolliflex, Yashica, Kodak, Polaroid, Nikon, Canon, and Wizen, among others.

For those interested in collecting vintage cameras, Azmad suggests starting small. "This is a Kodak camera," he explains, holding it up. "Anyone can use this. If you don't know how, you can learn with this – it's easy." From there, enthusiasts can graduate to more complex automatic cameras and beyond.

Despite the rapid digitisation, vintage cameras hold a special place in people's hearts. "Many customers buy them to remember their fathers or grandfathers," he says. "They want to keep their family's history alive."

Among all the cameras he has sold and collected, his personal favourite remains safely in his house – a large wooden camera reminiscent of those seen in old movies. "That one is special," he says with a smile. For Azmad, selling cameras is not just a business – it's a way of keeping history and the love of photography alive.

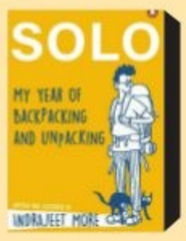
Vintage cameras at Azmad's shop

PICS: ABHISHEK NAYAK, ROSHINI KAR, SUJANA

BOOK NOOK

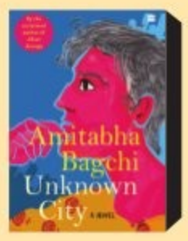
Mudritha
by Jissa Jose and translated by Jayasree Kalathil

Part detective story, part closely observed portrayals of intimate lives, it is a deeply moving exploration of women and the journeys they make to discover themselves.



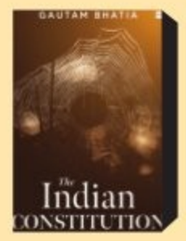
Solo: My Year of Backpacking and Unpacking
by Indrajeet More

Barely a year into college, nineteen-year-old Indrajeet More is offered to host a travel show on budget backpacking across India. As he undertakes a year-long journey across thirteen cities in India, what unfolds is a string of surreal life experiences.



Unknown City
by Amitabha Bagchi

In the book, Arindam examines how his views on love, betrayal, ambition, masculinity and loneliness have evolved over time. What follows is a moving journey of self-discovery.



The Indian Constitution: A Conversation with Power
by Gautam Bhatia

The book brings a new lens to analyse the Constitution: as a document that creates, shapes, channels, and constrains power.

DANCE BRIGADE

Actor Shruti Haasan performs at the innings break of a WPL match between RCB and MI at M Chinnaswamy Stadium | VINOD KUMAR T

QUICKFIX

ROSE COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

- **Metal rose cookie mould:** 1
- **Cumin seeds:** 5 g
- **Sugar:** 250 g
- **Egg:** 1
- **Rice flour:** 500 g
- **Black sesame seeds:** 5 g
- **Coconut mylk:** 50 ml

METHOD

- Prepare sugar syrup and add rice flour, cumin, and sesame seeds. Mix well.
- Add coconut mylk and beaten egg. Mix well.
- Heat oil in a frying pan and place the mould in the oil for one minute.
- Dip the mould in the batter and place it back into the hot oil.
- Fry until golden brown. Cool and serve.

Contributed by **Pushpavalli,** Kannur

DR VIVEK ARORA

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Dr Gandhi's Pet Clinic, Delhi

My 3-year-old cat has been vomiting for the past two days. She has not eaten anything unusual. Should I be scared of this?

Vomiting in cats can stem from different causes, and while it's concerning, it doesn't always signal a serious issue. If your cat hasn't eaten anything unusual, the vomiting could be due to hairballs, a mild stomach upset, or stress. However, if the vomiting continues or is accompanied by other signs like lethargy, loss of appetite, or diarrhoea, it's important to consult a vet. Cats often mask symptoms, so it's better to be cautious. A vet can assess her health, identify any underlying conditions, and recommend the proper treatment if necessary.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

DHANURASANA BOLSTER ELBOWS ON FLOOR (BOW POSE BOLSTER ELBOWS ON FLOOR)

This is a variation of the base pose, Dhanurasana (Bow Pose). It falls under the category of prone poses with a backbend. This chest and hip-opening variation is part of Iyengar Yoga, where the use of props is encouraged to help achieve poses. In the base pose, the student lifts the legs high and raises the upper body to maintain the position. The effort required is greater, and it demands more endurance to keep the torso lifted. In this variation, the bolster under the thighs helps raise the legs higher, and the student can lift the upper body with ease due to the forearm support.

STEPS

- Before practising this pose, keep a bolster handy. Align the body in Advasana Variation Shoulders Raised (Reverse Corpse Pose Variation Shoulders Raised) and relax for a few breaths.
- Slowly turn to one side and slide the bolster beneath the thighs. Align it so that the thighs rest on it. Preferably, the thighs should be hip-width apart.
- Inhale, rest the abdomen on the floor, and align the upper body in the Sphinx position. Keep the shoulders broad and away from the ears, and the head stable with a gaze ahead. Continue breathing.
- Inhale again, lift the legs by bending at the knees, and bring them closer to the upper body with toes pointing inward. Keep breathing, and with every exhale, try lifting the legs higher. Hold for as long as comfortable.
- Release the pose by placing the upper body on the mat while remaining in the prone position, with the forehead resting on the ground. Relax for a few breaths, then slowly turn to one side and remove the bolster.
- Realign in Advasana Variation Shoulders Raised, and finally, relax in Advasana (Corpse Pose).

BENEFITS

- Acts as a great energy booster and hormone balancer for teenagers.
- Enhances posture and increases flexibility, benefitting athletes.
- Improves awareness and focus (concentration).
- Helps reduce obesity and maintains body balance.
- Controls cortisol levels, reducing the risk of depression.
- Strengthens abdominal muscles and improves overall health.
- Relieves all types of muscle pain, including back pain.
- Helps alleviate acute back pain in women.
- Strengthens leg muscles and stretches the feet and hand muscles.
- Stretches the shoulders, chest, and abdomen.
- Opens the hips and psoas muscles.
- Enhances blood circulation and helps maintain a steady heart rate.
- Stimulates the adrenal and thyroid glands.
- Regulates hormone secretion and supports the endocrine system.
- Activates two energy chakras – Anahata (Heart Chakra) and Vishuddha (Throat Chakra).
- Long-held, supported nature of the pose allows the body and mind to rest and rejuvenate.
- Promotes better sleep. Used in therapeutic yoga sequences to release tension from the upper back, neck, and shoulders.
- Improves spinal flexibility, creating a sense of openness and positivity.
- Beneficial for students with respiratory disorders like asthma.
- Helps restore and de-stress the body, calming the mind.

LIMITATIONS

- Students who have recently undergone abdominal or neck surgery, or have injuries to the spine, back, abdomen, legs, or elbows, should avoid this pose.
- Those suffering from high blood pressure, hernia, or ulcer disease should refrain from practising it.
- Senior citizens, pregnant women, and those menstruating should avoid this pose.

By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

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WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Football Fun

Follow up on the I-League by attending the tussle between Sporting Club Bengaluru vs Shillong Lajong FC. Bring your friends along for a game that promises to be intense and full of action!

WHEN: February 26, 3.30pm
WHERE: Bangalore Football Stadium, Ashok Nagar
DETAILS: allevents.in

Healing Through Colours

Discover the transformative energy of colours in an immersive one-hour workshop designed to relax your mind, uplift your spirit, and bring balance to your energy. Unlock the healing power of colours and find emotional clarity.

WHEN: February 25, 11.30am
WHERE: Patron of Fine Arts, Kodihalli
DETAILS: allevents.in

Academic Talk

Engage in a thoughtful lecture session by K Vijayraghavan on what the future holds for India seen through the lens of science and technology. The talk will be followed by a Q&A session with the audience.

WHEN: February 25, 6.30pm
WHERE: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur
DETAILS: bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

Coffee Crafts

Blend art with your love for caffeine and test your artistic skills in this unique sensory experience. Meet fellow artistes along the way and expand your creative circle!

WHEN: February 26, 4pm
WHERE: Patron of Fine Arts, Indiranagar
Details: bookmyshow.com

Bonding Over Games

Join a day of fun and excitement, playing your favourite board games and discovering new ones. Engage in friendly competitions, make new friends and enjoy great company.

WHEN: February 25, 8pm
WHERE: The Coffee Brewery, Koramangala
DETAILS: allevents.in

Play Unfolds

Watch the play *Ne Othello Na Lago*, a modern adaptation of William Shakespeare's famous play *Othello*, and discover the relevance of the themes in the classic in modern context.

WHEN: February 25, 7.30pm
WHERE: Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Musical Sprint

Unleash your inner performer, sing your favourite tunes, and battle it out in epic Antakshari rounds in an unforgettable musical showdown. Get ready to sing, laugh, and make memories.

WHEN: February 25, 7pm
WHERE: Casa Karaoke, JP Nagar
DETAILS: 70190 10079

ARTCORNER

SERENE BLOOMS, STARK REALITY

In his 'Lotus Series', artist Shuvendu Sarkar contrasts the serenity of lotus blooms with the realities of modern life and wildlife conservation

Photo Mein Gosht
(One-pot green cardamom meat stew)

Ingredients (serves 6)

- Fat-trimmed bone in goat/lamb (even-sized pieces of shank, shoulder, neck): 1 kg

For the marinade

- Salt: 1 tsp
- Coarse black pepper: ½ tbsp

For the soup

- Oil: 6-8 tbsp
- Green cardamom powder (45-50 green cardamom pods ground with the skins): 6 heaped tsp
- Green chillies (horizontally chopped into 2cm pieces, optionally deseed): 4-8
- Spinach (finely chopped): 100-130 g
- Green coriander leaves and soft stalks (finely chopped): 20-30 g
- Coarse black pepper: 1 tbsp
- Salt: 1 tsp + to taste

For garnish

- Green cardamom powder: ½ tsp
- Coarse black pepper: ½ tsp
- Fresh mint/chives (finely chopped): ½ handful

Prep

Rinse the meat in lukewarm water then pat dry. Marinate and leave overnight in the fridge, or if short on time for 3 hours at least. Bring to room temperature before cooking.

Cook

- Gently heat a heavy-based pot and add oil. Add the green cardamom powder and stir until fragrant – the cardamom will start to emulsify. This needs to be done at a very low heat, or the green cardamom will turn bitter if burnt.
- Add the meat and coat with the green cardamom powder. Gently sear the meat for 5-6 minutes. Toss in the green chillies, spinach, and green coriander, along with a tbsp black pepper, a tsp salt, and increase heat slightly. Stir and cook for 10 minutes – the spinach will start to release water. Reduce heat to minimum, add 300ml hot water, and cook covered for 1.5 hours. Stir every 30 minutes.
- At the 1.5 hour mark, add an additional 300ml hot water and mix. Cook covered on low heat for another 60 minutes, or until the meat starts falling off the bone and the oil separates. Then remove from heat and set aside for 1 hour. Taste and adjust seasoning.
- The result should be an emulsion of meaty broth, spinach, chilli, and cardamom. The spinach should have broken down completely and blended with the meat juices.

Serve

Garnish with more coarse black pepper, green cardamom powder, and a sprinkling of herbs. Eat with phulkas and a side of yoghurt salad or as a soup with crusty bread.

Notes

- Green chillies cannot be skipped in this dish.
- The total quantity of greens should not be increased.
- Tastes best after 3-4 hours, or the next day.

SECRETS FROM SINDH

With *Sindh: Sindhi Recipes and Stories from a Forgotten Land*, Sapna Ajwani aims to tell readers about the Sindhi community, lost recipes, and their evolution since the partition

SONU M KOTHARI

BECAUSE no one knows us, our partition experience or our cuisine. Someone had to tell the story, right," says author Sapna Ajwani, as she narrates the experiences of millions who lived through the partition – particularly the Sindhis who lost not just their homeland but also their cultural roots in the process. Ajwani, who has been running a supper club – SindhiGusto – in the UK since 2016, questions, "Ask people around you and see how many even know where Sindh is, or that there is a group of people called Sindhis or that when India was partitioned Sindh was not unlike Punjab or Bengal." Now, with her book *Sindh: Sindhi Recipes and Stories from a Forgotten Land* (HarperCollins; ₹778), she wants to educate readers about this community, and their cuisine.

The book, was penned with an intention to 'evoke a sense of pride in Sindhis across faiths and nations'. She also aims to make the cuisine more accessible and inspire people to cook traditional food.

To bring this book to life, Sapna travelled the 'length of Sindh, literally the route of the Indus/Sindhu river,' uncovering the region's culinary treasures. Through her extensive research and travels, she rediscovered long-forgotten recipes. In an interview with *CE*, Ajwani shares her journey of reclaiming these lost culinary gems, the stories behind them, and the importance of preserving Sindh's rich food heritage.

Excerpts:

Tell us about the cuisine in Sindh. What steps are the citizens there taking to globalise this cuisine?
In the smaller towns and villages, people are preserving the tradition and there are so many recipes in the book that I wrote because all the people who hosted me, showered so much of their love and affection in the form of food. Palli macchi (fish in green chana leaves), accho bhod (white meat), sholah mutton (mutton porridge), macchi jo bhat (fish pulao) etc. There was a restaurant I went to called Cafe Sindh started by a Sindhi there with familiar dishes such as seyal macchi (fish stew), macchi ji mani (fish stuffed in rotis), seyal bhee (lotus stem stew).

You mention Sindhis have adapted to and integrated into societies across various countries. Have local cuisines influenced traditional Sindhi food?
Sindhis are everywhere in India now. So many have adopted vegetarianism because they were looked down upon as meat and fish eaters, that's adaptation. Using certain ingredients like toor dal was not common in pre-partition Sindh. In fact, it is thought of as being slightly sweet, but the use of the dal has become quite common among Sindhis who settled in Central or North India. Until today, no one in our family cooks paneer unless they have adopted vegetarianism or have to eat it to get more protein.

A few years ago, I spoke to a third-generation Sindhi living in Spain to collaborate for my Supper Club. I learnt that the large Sindhi community there can't get access to good goats. They use local pork or beef to make the same meat dishes and have altered the goat dishes to suit lamb which is a much more fatty meat, and fish.

Your book mentions that Sindhi cooking follows Ayurvedic principles. How do these guidelines help choose and combine ingredients?
A lot of our Sindhi cooking is based on Ayurvedic principles, if you notice how the recipes are structured. The dish seyal teevan is a classic example of that. No garlic in any of the dried beans like chickpea, even lotus stem recipes because we treat them like meat. By the same token, we don't use ginger with fish. For oily fish, the use of onion and garlic is minimal like in the case of pallah or hilsa, our favourite fish.

How would you describe the use of spices in Sindhi cuisine?
The use of spices is restrained. Less is more for us. Some of our dishes contain two spices – black pepper and green cardamom. Many a time we sprinkle spices at the end, after cooking just for the aroma. Of course, garlic, onion, or ginger are all aromatics rather than spices. The use of garlic is balanced with onions as both are alliums and cancel each other out. For example, with meat, we tend to use very little or no garlic, as meat is a heavy ingredient. Hence if onions are already present, we don't use garlic. Cooked onion and garlic have a large sulphur content that gives you the feeling of heaviness and bloating, and hence should never be used together.

How important are such deeply-rooted books in keeping the culture alive and passing it on to the next generations?
Gen Y and Z have grown up with so many influences around them, so there needs to be something to keep them grounded in tradition when they get tired of social media trends and narratives. That's what I say to all my nieces and nephews: that I have written this book for them. At some point, when they miss home food, they can pick up my book and start cooking from it.

Sai Bhaji (Green vegetables)

Ingredients (serves 4-5)

- 350g finely chopped spinach (increase to 400g if sorrel isn't available)
- Fresh dill leaves and stalks (finely chopped): 40-60g
- Sorrel leaves and stalks (finely chopped): 150 g
- Chana dal: 75g
- Salt: 1-2 tsp + to taste
- Oil: 6-8 tbsp
- Fat garlic cloves (finely minced): 8-9
- Ginger (finely minced): 20-25g
- Turmeric powder: 2 tsp
- Green chillies (chopped): 3-5
- 250g coarsely chopped fresh/tinned tomatoes
- Coriander powder: 2 heaped tbsp
- Amchur (if no sorrel): 1 heaped tbsp

Prep

Clean, rinse, and soak the chana dal overnight in 250ml water, or in hot water for at least 3 hours.

Cook

- Strain the water from the chana dal and rinse it again.
- Heat a pressure cooker, add oil, and let it warm through. Add the ginger and garlic, and fry for 5 minutes, until the garlic starts to shrink and turns slightly golden. Add the chana dal and sauté for 2-3 minutes on medium heat. Add 200ml hot water to cover the dal and bring it to a slight boil and stir. Once foam starts to form on top, scoop and remove (taking care to not throw the garlic and ginger). After removing the foam, add turmeric and 1 tsp salt and mix it well. Stir until the raw smell of the turmeric disappears.

- Next, add all the chopped greens, green chillies, tomatoes, powdered spices, and amchur (only if you haven't added sorrel). Stir vigorously and mix for at least 5-6 minutes. Then add 500ml hot water and cook for 7-8 whistles in an Indian pressure cooker (about 16-18 minutes in a Western one). Whisk until smooth with a hand whisk and blend evenly for a thick and flowing consistency similar to double cream. Taste and adjust seasoning. The final flavours should carry the taste of dill, a little spice, and sourness.
- For open pot cooking: always soak lentils overnight. Top up with a litre of hot water and simmer. Stir constantly until the lentils are tender and the greens have completely broken down. Mash till smooth and adjust seasoning.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PINKY SOLANKI**, W/o. Yathindra Solanki, residing at #A3-303, Parasmani Regency, 8th Cross, 7th Main, Opp to Indian Bank, 2nd block, Jayanagar III Block, Bengaluru 560011, have changed my name to **PINKY J JAIN** vide Affidavit Dated: 21/02/2025, sworn before Notary **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RAJESH KUMAR N,** doing DGM at Private Company and Resident of No. 10, Ward No.6, MV Extension, College Road, Shivashakthi Nagar, Hosakote, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka-562114, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **RAJESH KUMAR** to **RAJESH KUMAR N** henceforth I shall be known and called as **RAJESH KUMAR N** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 06/02/2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **DIWAKAR.N.KAGAWAD** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VIJAYKUAMR DAMODHAR CHINDAK,** S/o Damodar, Residing at #Opp. To Bank of Baroda, Mangalwar Peth, Banahatti, Bagalkot District, Pin-58311, now camped at Bengaluru, have changed my name to **VIJAYKUAMR CHINDAK,** vide affidavit dated: 22.02.2025 before Notary **SIVAKUMARA M.N,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, the undersigned **NAGAMMA,** W/o Anjaneya, aged about 31 years, and resident of No. 271, 25th Block, MSB Lane, Police Quarters, Mysore Road, Bangalore-560018, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **NAGARTNA** to **NAGAMMA,** henceforth I shall be known and called as **NAGAMMA** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 21/02/2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **BHARATI PATIL** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Shanthappa Vadagoa**, S/o. Mahadev, Aged about 43 years, Residing at No. 149/2 and 223, Jala Hobli, Embassy International Riding School, Tarahunase, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 562 157, do hereby declare that, I have changed my name from **Shanthappa** to **Shanthappa Vadagoa** vide affidavit dated 21.02.2025 sworn to before S.R. Ravikumar, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **JAGADEESH M. C.** S/O CHANDRASHEKAR M. C. Father of SAANVI SHETTY K.J., aged about 40 years. Residing at No.11, Acharya College Road, Near Anjaneya Temple, Veer Sheettihalli, Chikkabanavara, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru District, Karnataka state, Pin Code - 560090, have changed our minor child name from **SAANVI SHETTY K.J.** to **"TEJASMITA SHREE K.J."**, vide affidavit dated 4/2/2025 sworn to before M.Rajendra Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MRS. RUPALI DILIPAKUMAR HUDDAR,** Aged about 42 years, W/o. **DILIPAKUMAR MAHARUDRA HUDDAR,** R/o No. 216, 3A Block, Anjanapura BDA Layout, Bangalore 560 108, state that my name is wrongly entered in some documents as **RUPALI HUDDAR** (Old Name) and as **RUPALI RAMACHANDRA SANADI** (maiden name), where as my correct name is **MRS. RUPALI DILIPAKUMAR HUDDAR** (New Name) as per Aadhar card No. 201546245888 which shall be carried for all documentation, vide affidavit before notary G R Rajanna dated 19-02-2025.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **RAMESH DURGCHAND BHANDARI** S/o. Bhandari Durgchand Jain, residing at #15/2, Mohan Kheda Apartment, First Floor, Mill Road, Cottonpet, Bengaluru 560053, have changed my name to **RAMESH KUMAR BHANDARI** vide Affidavit Dated: 21/02/2025, sworn before Notary **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Madhusudhanan G,** son of K. P. Gangadharan, aged about 43 years, residing at No. E4, 806, SNN Raj Serenity, Begur Koppa Road, Yelenahalli, Bengaluru-560068, hereby declare that I have changed the name of my minor daughter from **MITHRA** to **MITHRA .M** vide affidavit dated 19-02-2025, sworn before Notary **P. ANURADHA,** Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **A.S. NATARAJAN alias NATARAJAN.A.S,** S/o. N.K. Sankaran, aged about 77 years, residing at Kailasam, No.2, 5th Cross, Near Shiva Temple, Gururaja Layout, Doddanekkundi, Bengaluru-560037, have changed my name to **SANKARAN NATARAJAN,** vide affidavit dated: 22.02.2025 before Notary **SIVAKUMARA M.N,** Bengaluru.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **Tashi Dorje**, S/o Tsering Spalgais, aged about 75 years, permanent resident of Nangkhar Pa, Lingshet, VTC Lingshet, PO Wanla, Sub-District Leh, District Union Territory of Ladakh-194106 and presently residing at First Floor, 106, 11th B Cross, 10th Main Road, Malleshwaram, Bangalore-560003, do hereby declare that **GESHE NGAWANG JANGCHUP, NGAWANG JANGCHUP** and **TASHI DORJE** all the three are my name and are and the same person i.e., myself, vide affidavit dated 21.02.2025, sworn to before Puttaramaiah, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, PAVANA REVANA SIDDAIAH, D/o. Mr. Revana Siddaiah, No.79, 1st Main, 1st Cross, RHCS Layout, Srigandha Kaval, Viswaneedam, Bangalore-560091, I have changed my name from PAVANA .R to PAVANA REVANA SIDDAIAH, before Notary Public D.K. Rameshappa, Bangalore, Notary Register No.256, vide Affidavit on 22/02/2025

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PAUL EDWIN.S** S/o B. SHANTHARAJ, aged about 39 years, (Date of Birth 23.12.1986), presently residing at # 412/413, 7th Cross, EWS, Near MES Collee, BTM 2nd Stage, Bilekahalli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru - 560 076, have changed my name from **PAUL EDWIN** to **PAUL EDWIN.S**, vide affidavit dated 20/2/2025 sworn to before T.Mallikarjuna Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SIDDARAM** (Old Name) S/o. SANGANNA MUDDAL, date of Birth:04-12-1987, residing at Sattva Anugraha Tower-16, 603, Magadi Main Road, Sumanahalli Flyover, Govindaraju Nagara, Kamakshipalya, Basaveshwara Nagar, Bengaluru-560079, have changed my name (New Name) to **SIDDARAM MUDDAL** for all purposes, Notary affidavit 08/02/2025.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAMARTH,** S/o. A K Raju, residing at #L-501, Tower 6, Adarsh Palm Retreat, Outer Ring Road, Bellandur, Bengaluru 560103, have changed my name to **SAMARTH R K** vide Affidavit Dated: 20/02/2025, sworn before Notary **MEER HASSAN,** Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **CHERIA VEETTIL SHAJI KURUP,** S/o Late Tupele Sadanandan Nair, aged 54 years, R/at No.3, 7th Cross, Ramaiah Layout, Kammanahalli, Bangalore-560 084 do hereby declare that all the names i.e. **C V SHAJI KURUP, SHAJI KURUP C V, SHAJI CHERIA VEETIL, CHERIA VEETIL SHAJI, C V SHAJI** are one and the same and refers to me only and my correct name is **CHERIA VEETTIL SHAJI KURUP,** vide affidavit dated 18th February 2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **UDAY KUMAR .K** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **K ADITYA KARAN,** S/o A Karunakaran, aged about 20 years, R/at No. B-402, Jalvayu Heights, AFNHB, HMT Road, Next Bridge Rubix, Jalhalli, Yeshwanthapura, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru-560022, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ADITYA KARAN** to **K ADITYA KARAN** henceforth I shall be known and called as **K ADITYA KARAN** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 22/02/2025, sworn before Advocate and Notary **V. SRINIVASA REDDY** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **VANISHRI KOTIN**, W/o. Late Parashuram Irappa Kotin, aged about 37 years, residing at Near Revanasiddeshwara School, Sangameshwara Nagar, Muddebihal Taluk, Vijayapura District-586212, Karnataka, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **VANISHRI KOTIN** to **SHIVALEELA PATIL**, vide affidavit dated 22.02.2025, sworn to before M. Rajendra, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mr. Perzeus Abhas Baig** S/o Abbas Ali Baig aged about 36 yrs, resided at Flat no 006, 1 block, Gopalan Olympia, Kumbalagodu, off. Mysore Road, Bangalore, have changed my name from **Perzeus Abhas Baig** to **Perzeus Abhas** and henceforth I shall be known as the **Perzeus Abhas** for all purposes., vide affidavit dated 12/2/2025 sworn to before M.Narendran Advocate and Notary Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **BHAGYAMMA** W/O RAMESH.M aged about 43 years. Residing at Tharalu Post, Guttepalya, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South, Bengaluru Dist - 560082. have changed my name from **BHAGYAMMA** to **K.A. VENKATAMMA.,** vide affidavit dated 4/2/2025 sworn to before M.Rajendra Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MISBA SHARIEFF,** D/o. Anwar **Sharieff,** Aged about 27 Years, R/at No. 58, 2ND Floor, 4th Cross, RBI Extension, Jayanagar, 3rd Block, Bengaluru-560041, my true and **Correct Name is MISBA SHARIEFF** Recorded in my Aadhaar, but in my **Passport MISBA SHARIFF,** which is incorrect, the same is to be corrected / changed to **MISBA SHARIEFF in my Passport,** Affidavit dated: 15.02.2025 before Notary P.ANURADHA, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SUMAN CHAND**
Aged About 49 Years No 201
Rakesh Fantasy Garden
2nd Main Road
4th Cross Kasthuri Nagar
Bangalore 560043
have Changed my name from
SUMMAN CHAND TO SUMAN CHAND
Vide Affidavit dated 20-02-2025
before advocate & Notary Uday Kumar K.
at Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SMT. SHAIK MULLA SAMEERA,** Aged about 33 years, **W/o. Sri. Shaik Mulla Sadiq,** Residing at No. 5B, 220, 2nd Floor, Vaishnavi Serene, IVRI Road, Behind CRPF, Ananthapura Village, Attur Post, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore 560064. In my Educational certificates and Old Passport (M4942321), my father name has written **Wrongly as SHAIK IBRAHIM instead of SHAIK IBRAHEEM.** I have declared **my Father's name From SHAIK IBRAHIM TO SHAIK IBRAHEEM,** vide affidavit dated 18-02-2025, Sworn made before Advocate & Notary C.R. Ravichandra Reddy, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **ROOPA D. RAO,** W/o Late Diwakar Rao M.H. aged about 41 years, Residing at No. 8, 4th Cross, 'A' Block, Gurudarshan Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru-560097, do hereby declare that both the names i.e. **ROOPA D. RAO** and **ROOPA B** are one and the same and refers to me only, henceforth I shall be known and called as **ROOPA D. RAO** and **ROOPA B** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 21/02/2025 sworn before Advocate and Notary **B.S. PADMA PRASAD** at Bangalore.

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SAHANA MURTHY TO LAUNCH VISHWAS SHANKAR IN ROMANTIC REVENGE DRAMA

A High Court lawyer-turned-actor, Vishwas will star in, produce, and score the music for the film *Innocent*, with Manvita Kamath finalised for the principal cast

Manvita Kamath

Sahana Murthy

Vishwas Shankar

CE FEATURES

ONE look at Vishwas Shankar, who has a slight resemblance to Hindi actor Vijay Varma, and it's clear that he is all set to foray into Kannada cinema. This newcomer is poised to carve out his own identity as the lead in *Innocent*, a romantic revenge drama directed by Sahana Murthy. Sahana, known for helming films like *Rose*, *Leader*, and his last venture *Trivikrama*, will now gear up for his fourth directorial, with shooting set to begin in just a month.

But Vishwas Shankar's journey to this point has been anything but conventional. Once a dedicated lawyer in the High Court, he made the bold decision to follow his true passion for acting, stepping away from a legal career. The son of Shankar, a retired IAS officer, Vishwas is not just focusing on acting; he has big plans to expand into film production as well. He will be backing *Innocent* through his own production company, Kind Brother F ilms. Even more exciting, he will compose the film's music. Vishwas is also preparing to launch his very own audio label, Vishwas Music, which is currently in the works.

The *Innocent* team, which has locked Vishwas Shankar for the lead role, will also feature *Tagaru* star Manvita Kamath. The rest of the principal cast, including another female actor, is expected to be finalised soon.

Behind the camera, Guru Prashanth Rai, who has previously worked with Sahana Murthy on his projects, will be handling the cinematography.

'I couldn't resist the humour elements in *Shabhash Baddimagane*'

CE FEATURES

PRAMOD Shetty has often drawn interest in donning the khaki, enjoying the opportunity to portray a wide range of police officers on screen—from the corrupt and honest to the innocent and villainous. However, his latest role in *Shabhash Baddimagane*, directed by BS Rajshekhar, presents a fresh challenge. As he admits, "I've played various cop roles, but playing a Sombari police officer in this film was something completely new and challenging. I was excited about the intriguing and humorous elements in the script and couldn't resist taking on the role."

Set to release on February 28, the film tells the story of a police officer who is perceived as inefficient by his peers but ultimately ends up solving a major case. Pramod Shetty explains, "The entire film takes place in a police station, and despite being called ineffective, my character solves a case. The audience will have to watch to find out how."

Produced by Chaithra Prakash under the Kishan Productions banner, *Shabhash Baddimagane* is inspired by a real-life incident from the 1980s, set in the rural police stations of Chikkamagaluru. Written by Rajshekhar, the film's story is said to be set in a period-appropriate context with accurate locations and costumes. It follows the journey of a police officer who, though dedicated to his job, shows more interest in his personal life. A crime within his jurisdiction leads to an investigation full of comedy, punchy dialogues, and intriguing twists, says the director.

Adyapriya stars as the female lead, while the film marks the big-screen debut of Samrat Shetty. The cast also includes Kavya Prakash, Ravi Teja, Mithra, Shankar Ashwath, and Prakash Tuminad.

Music for the film was composed by Prashanth Siddi, while cinematography is handled by Annaji Nagaraj.

A meandering love drama wrapped in emotion

A SHARADHAA

OLAVINA PAYANA

Direction: Kishan Balnad

Cast: Sunil Kumar, Kushi, Priya Hegde, Padmaja Rao, and Bala Rajawadi

A GOOD story about themes such as love, loss, and second chances should resonate with us and show the complexities of moving on after a tragedy. Director Kishan Balnad's debut film *Olavina Payana* tries to explore these themes through the journey of Sunil (Sunil Kumar), making it one of those relatable middle-class stories. Sunil falls deeply in love with Vainavi (Kushi), the daughter of Cariappa (Bala Rajawadi), a wealthy coffee planter. In a bid to marry her, Sunil challenges Cariappa, who, as expected in classic narratives, humiliates him and sets an impossible task: Sunil must prove himself worthy by becoming somebody in society. The challenge sends Sunil to Bengaluru, where he not only builds a successful life but also creates opportunities for others before eventually marrying Vainavi.

RATING 2.5/5

Up until this point, *Olavina Payana* is a traditional love story laced with ambition, but it takes an unexpected turn when Vainavi dies of a sudden cardiac arrest. From here, the film shifts focus to Sunil's emotional turmoil as he is compelled to marry Deepika (Priya Hegde), setting the stage for an exploration of grief, second chances, and the lingering shadow of past love.

The central philosophical question that *Olavina Payana* poses is a heavy one: How does a person cope when the love of their life is lost, and is it possible, or right, to build a new life with someone else? Sunil is caught between his memories of Vainavi and his responsibilities toward his new family. The film attempts to tackle this complex emotional terrain, but the director's handling of the narrative feels slightly heavy-handed. The slow pacing and overly sentimental moments detract from the otherwise intriguing premise. Instead of drawing us deeper into Sunil's grief, the film spends too much time on unnecessary details that take away from the core emotional journey. A more focused script would have allowed the audience to connect more deeply with Sunil's internal struggle, leading to a more satisfying conclusion.

A serial actor who transitioned to films, Sunil's performance is sincere, portraying a man who grows from a hopeful lover to someone burdened by the weight of his past. Kushi, who plays Vainavi, is graceful in her role, though her screen time is limited due to the early plot twist. Priya Hegde, as Deepika, brings a steady presence, but her character lacks the depth needed to make her stand out. Visually, the film doesn't do much with the contrast between the rural and urban settings, missing a chance to reflect Sunil's changing emotional state through the locations. The music tries to match the emotional tone, helping to set the right mood during key moments.

Olavina Payana is a film with good intentions and meaningful themes, but it struggles to fully deliver. Still, it offers an emotional look at love, loss, and second chances—reminding us that, even in imperfection, there's always something to learn.

A still from the film

Pratyartha to hit theatres this week

CE FEATURES

PRATYARTHA is set to release on February 28, and the trailer was recently launched with actor SriiMurali gracing the event, wishing the team success. Directed by Arjun Kamath from Karkala, Udupi, the film is billed as an investigative thriller. Director Arjun described *Pratyartha* as a film crafted to meet the expectations of Kannada cinema audiences, encouraging people to proudly recommend it to non-Kannada speakers as well. "The title may be old, but it perfectly fits our story and is contemporary. It's an investigative thriller where everything has meaning," said Kamath. He continued, "Understanding the preferences of today's youth, my friends Ram and I spent a year shaping this script."

Producers Nagesh M, Jai R Prabhu, Nityananda Pai, Premkumar V, and Bharat Shetty supported the project's realisation. The film features a dual-shaded storyline, with Ram and Akshay Karkala in the lead roles and Shruti Chandrashekhar as the female lead. The supporting cast includes Suman Talwar, Naveen D Padil, Ramesh Bhat, and Deepak Rai. Music is composed by Sunad Gowtham, with cinematography by Vinuth.

James Watkins to direct DC's *Clayface* film

CE FEATURES

DC Studios has tapped Speak No Evil director James Watkins to helm its upcoming live-action *Clayface* film. The project, based on the classic Batman villain, is set to be penned by horror veteran Mike Flanagan. *Clayface* first appeared in Detective Comics #40 in 1940 as a vengeful actor who turned to crime. Over the decades, the character evolved into a shape-shifting antagonist with tragic undertones, making him a fascinating figure across comics, animation, and live-action, including appearances in Gotham and Pennyworth. Production is slated to begin later this year as part of DC's strategy to explore a diverse range of storytelling, from large-scale superhero blockbusters like Superman to more intimate, character-driven films.

Matt Reeves, the director behind The Batman, is producing the film alongside Lynn Harris, as well as DC Studios heads James Gunn and Peter Safran. *Clayface* is scheduled for release on September 11, 2026.

Casting has yet to be announced, but Gunn and Safran stated that actors who voice characters in DC Studios' animated projects will also portray them in the live-action film.

A surreal journey into fatherhood that never fully delivers

A SHARADHAA

NIMMAGONDU SIHI SUDDI

Directors: Raghu Bhat and Sudhindra

Cast: Raghu Bhat, Kavya Shetty, Harini Shreekanth, Prajwal, Vijay Raghavendra, and Sujay Shastry

NIMMAGONDU Sihi Suddi presents a surreal story where Arjun wakes up to find himself on an unexpected path to fatherhood, starting with a nightmare about experiencing labour pains. The twist is striking—a man feeling the pain typically associated with women during childbirth. This sets the stage for a story about identity, responsibility, and the emotional challenges of becoming a parent. The concept of *Nimmagondu Sihi Suddhi* (A Sweet News for You) is fresh and offers a new way of looking at pregnancy, fatherhood, relationships, and identity. However, the character-driven film struggles to develop its ideas fully. The quirky moments may appeal to some viewers, but they often overshadow the more important themes, leaving the film feeling incomplete.

Instead of exploring Arjun's emotional journey deeply, the film often gets lost in strange, chaotic events that distract from its main themes.

The story could have explored issues like personal freedom, societal pressures, and the realities of fatherhood, but it feels uneven and, at times, confusing. The surreal moments, instead of adding depth, often take away from what could have been a more emotional and meaningful exploration of Arjun's transformation.

Raghu Bhat plays Arjun with style and confidence, which fits the character, but he doesn't quite capture the emotional struggle Arjun should go through. Kavya Shetty as Anusha is warm and pleasant, but her role feels more like a tool to push Arjun's emotional growth rather than a fully developed character in her own right. Their romantic subplot doesn't add much emotional depth to the story, leaving their relationship feeling shallow.

Prajwal, who plays DD, Arjun's best friend, brings in some light humor, but his character doesn't feel fully fleshed out. He's there to listen to Arjun's problems but doesn't contribute much beyond that. Similarly, Sujay Shashtry's role as a police inspector provides some comedic moments, but his character is forgettable and lacks development.

Harini Shreekanth, as Sheela, Arjun's neighbour and supposedly a social media influencer turned cook, adds a modern touch to the film. However, while her performance is competent, it doesn't fully fulfill the role.

Vijay Raghavendra appears briefly as Dr. Vikas, providing some medical context to the strange events. However, his character doesn't add much to the exploration of Arjun's inner struggles.

The pacing of the film is another issue. While the strange and unpredictable nature of the plot keeps things interesting at first, it eventually slows down and feels drawn-out. The film spends too much time on events that don't help push the story forward. Arjun's high-society lifestyle could have been a way to explore the pressures of modern relationships, but other subplots prevent these themes from being fully explored, and that never fully delivers.

As the credits roll, the film leaves you with many questions: If the day comes when men can experience pregnancy, will they handle it with the same emotional depth as women? Would a man truly understand the complexities of fatherhood if he had to bear a child? Maybe, one day, we'll find out

RATING 2.5/5